The Christian anthropology of Augustine Baker's 'Holy wisdom'.

Power, David John

THE CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY OF AUGUSTINE BAKER'S *HOLY WISDOM*

DAVID JOHN POWER

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ABSTRACT

Holy Wisdom, originally called *Sancta Sophia*, was published in Douai, France, in 1657. Its editor was Fr Serenus Cressy, but its content was drawn from the voluminous spiritual writings of Fr Augustine Baker OSB (1575-1641). Baker was well versed in patristic and medieval spiritual thought as well as in contemporary writings. *Holy Wisdom* came to exercise great influence both within and beyond the English Benedictine Congregation to which Baker belonged; many today would acknowledge the continuing value of the book as a manual of spiritual instruction and as a work summing up several strands of the ascetical tradition.

A theory of the human person, sometimes explicit but more often implied, is assumed by *Holy Wisdom*. Moving from the belief that Christianity is centred in the Incarnation, the present thesis develops an incarnational theology from the perspective of which Baker's work is criticized. Three main areas are dealt with: firstly, the model of conflict. Baker locates conflict within the arena of the human person in such a way as to violate the essential unity of the person. Secondly, his understanding of the human person as an individual displays a spiritualizing tendency that undermines the value of embodiment. Thirdly, his consideration of the social context of human personhood is characterized by a spiritualizing individualism that conflicts with key incarnational notions such as the body of Christ and human relationships.

The thesis concludes that Baker's Christian anthropology, and, by implication, that of the spiritual strands he represents, is deficient from the perspective of the Incarnation.

CONTENTS

Contents

Contents

Contents

ABBREVIATIONS

B	Baker's autobiography, published in CRS
Conf	Justin McCann (ed), *The Confessions of Venerable Father Augustine Baker* (BO & W, London, 1922)
Cr	Serenus Cressy's biography of Baker, published in Justin McCann (ed), *The Life of Father Augustine Baker* (BO & W, London, 1933)
CRS	*Catholic Record Society*, Vol 33 (1933), edited by Justin McCann and Hugh Connolly
DS	Henry Denzinger & Adolf Schönmetzer (eds), *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum & Declarationum de Rebus Fidei & Morum* (Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1965, ed XXXIV)
EBC	English Benedictine Congregation
GS	*Gaudium et Spes*, from Austin Flannery (ed), *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Fowler Wright, Leominster, 1980)
HW	*Holy Wisdom*
P	Leander Prichard's biography of Baker, published in CRS
PG	J P Migne (ed), *Patrologia Graeca*
PL	J P Migne (ed), *Patrologia Latina*
RB 80	St Benedict, *The Rule* (ed. Timothy Fry, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1981)
S	Peter Salvin's biography of Baker, published in Justin McCann (ed), *The Life of Father Augustine Baker* (BO & W, London, 1933)
ST	Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*

ILLUSTRATIONS

Portrait of Fr Baker, taken from a contemporary engraving used as the frontispiece of the first edition of *Sancta Sophia* (1657)

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to produce a critique of the anthropological assumptions that underlie *Sancta Sophia or Directions for the Prayer of Contemplation*, a handbook of the spiritual life which presents the teachings of the English Benedictine Augustine Baker (1575-1641). Nowadays, it is commonly known by the English title *Holy Wisdom*. All such works adopt, implicitly or explicitly, a way of understanding the human person. Indeed, any writing that discusses the relationship between human beings and the divine must assume some theory of the human person. The study of such theories in the context of Christianity, constitutes Christian anthropology. My concern will be to establish the extent to which the anthropology of *Holy Wisdom* accords with the requirements of an incarnational theology, the lineaments of which I shall draw in chapter 3.

One of the main reasons for my opting to study *Holy Wisdom* is that, as an English Benedictine, I have been trained in a tradition that has been nourished on the spirituality of Baker. My concern is to expose this tradition to a critical assessment. I am not primarily interested in the book as an historical text: it is still read and still, by many, considered relevant to their lives. Many more, within the Christian church, attempt to live by principles that are similar to those assumed or recommended in this book. It is not particularly original. It is a work that finds its place within the tradition of Christian spiritual teaching. That tradition is neither single nor simple, but is characterized by a rich variety of attitudes and emphases. Baker's writings, and therefore *Holy Wisdom*, draw from the church fathers, from monastic traditions, from the medieval English mystics and from an extensive array of 16th and 17th century Catholic

writers. A critique of Baker is a critique of more than Baker.

My stance is that of a 20th century incarnational theologian who draws inspiration from the Christian anthropology of the second Vatican Council and particularly of *Gaudium et Spes*. There are, of course, several kinds of incarnationalism: it is not a monolithic discipline. In chapter 3, as I have said, I shall attempt to describe some principles of such a theology. What I say there will be by no means systematic or complete. My conclusions will be brought to bear on *Holy Wisdom*. The reader may question the admissibility of subjecting an historical text to such a scrutiny. If the text were purely of historical interest, then I would agree. But I am claiming that *Holy Wisdom* is not merely of historical interest. Its exponents would argue its relevance today and recommend it as teaching a valuable way of living the Christian life.[1] If their recommendation is to be accepted, then the living work must stand before the tribunal of modern theological insights. If it cannot accord with the theological understanding and experience of today, then it may have to be relegated to the status of a period piece. My main interest is in a modern critique; nevertheless, chapter 3 will present an historical perspective in addition and will glance at how Baker fares in the context of two of his own precursors.

Holy Wisdom will be investigated in detail in chapters 4 - 6. Chapter 4 will assess its use of conflict imagery, chapter 5 the understanding of the human person as an individual and chapter 6, the human person in the social context. My general conclusion will be a rather negative one: that Baker's anthropology, an anthropology that is not unique to him, conflicts with the insights of an incarnational theology inspired by Vatican II.

Before moving into chapter 1, it would be helpful to introduce *Holy Wisdom* here in a little more detail. The book was published in Douai,

Introduction

France, in 1657. It is the work of Fr Serenus Cressy OSB and is a digest drawn from the voluminous writings of Baker. Despite Cressy's editorial hand the content is Baker's and the book can be taken as summing up Baker's spiritual teaching. Thus, after the preliminary chapter, I shall talk constantly of Baker and rarely mention Cressy.

Although published as *Sancta Sophia*, it has been known as *Holy Wisdom* since the reprint of 1911. I shall use the modern name. All my references will be to the edition currently in print, that edited by Gerard Sitwell,[2] and will refer, for convenience, to page numbers in that edition rather than to chapters and paragraphs.

Holy Wisdom was produced within English Benedictine communities established on the continent; Catholic priests and religious had been banned from England since the middle of the 16th century. The Catholic history of the period is interesting and complex, but it is not my direct concern. Nevertheless, an historical text must be read with a sensitivity to historical circumstances. Therefore my opening chapter will set the scene and present Baker and his editor. The second chapter will trace the production of *Holy Wisdom* and its journey down the centuries to the present day.

CHAPTER 1

"THAT MYSTERIOUS MAN"[1]

AUGUSTINE BAKER'S LIFE AND SETTING

I THE PERIOD

a) Reform and counter-reform

The period in which Augustine Baker lived, that of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, is a particularly rich one for the student of Christianity. In 1540, thirty-five years before Baker's birth, monasticism in England was effectively abolished, despite the short-lived revival of Westminster Abbey under Queen Mary. Nearly a thousand years had passed since 597, the year in which Augustine of Canterbury brought Roman Christianity to England.[2] A monk himself, Augustine's mission had opened a millenium in which monasticism was a major force in the English church. Although ideas associated with the Protestant reformers can be traced back into the middle ages,[3] the 16th century was the period which produced the great reformers such as Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and, in England, Cranmer. On the Roman side the Council of Trent (1545-1563) would not merely address itself to the Protestant challenge, but would be a reforming council in its own right. What Protestantism did was to force the Roman Church to clarify, refine and systematize its theology.

But this was not only a period of debate and discussion. Many men and women of both Protestant and Roman persuasion would give their lives in defence of their religious beliefs. The English recusant communities on the continent knew that life on the home mission carried the possibility of

imprisonment, torture and death. Baker died in London, probably from plague, on August 9th 1641. In the English Benedictine necrologies, the monk whose death immediately preceded his was Lawrence Mabbs, who died in chains in Newgate Prison on July 20th. Those who followed Baker were Ambrose Barlow (hanged at Lancaster on September 20th) and Alban Roe (hanged at Tyburn on January 31st 1642).[4] Barlow and Roe were among the forty martyrs canonized by Pope Paul VI in 1970.

It was in this turbulent period and mainly in English monastic communities on the continent that Baker would preserve and transmit the wisdom of the medieval English mystics. He knew the great western doctors, Augustine of Hippo, Gregory and Bernard. He knew the monastic desert tradition and the Rule of St Benedict. He had read several medieval continental mystics such as Tauler and was widely familiar with a range of spiritual writers of the 16th and early 17th centuries. Although there was originality in what he wrote, his spiritual works reflect clearly the strands of influence to which he was exposed.[5]

b) The English Benedictines[6]

If an English man or woman wished to lead the religious life then there was no option but to go to the continent. Thus the last years of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century saw the formation of seminaries for secular priests in such places as Valladolid, Douai and Rome, and houses for men and women of different religious orders. One of the earliest of such English communities was the Benedictine convent of nuns set up in Brussels in 1598 by Lady Mary Percy. Catholic men from Britain who wished to be Benedictines gravitated to various long-established Spanish and Italian monasteries.

Although individual monasteries had some degree of autonomy, they were linked together in federations known as congregations. These were often organized on a national basis. In the early years of the 17th century, British missionary monks came back to their homeland from both the Spanish and Cassinese (Italian) congregations. The latter, which Baker joined, had grown from the Benedictine reform started in the monastery of St Justina in Padua at the beginning of the 15th century under Abbot Ludovico Barbo.[7] There may have been some rivalry between the members of these two congregations, but soon four houses of English monks were founded, initially drawing their personnel from the continental monasteries. These houses were St Gregory's at Douai (1607), St Lawrence's at Dieulouard in Lorraine (1608), St Benedict's at St Malo (1611) and St Edmund's in Paris (1615). In 1607 Fr Sigebert Buckley, the last survivor of Marian Westminster, witnessed the profession of two Englishmen as members of the Cassinese congregation, and affiliated them to Westminster. Thus was revived, on rather questionable legal grounds, the supposed Benedictine congregation of medieval England. It was Augustine Baker who dealt with the legal complications of this revival.

The English Benedictine Congregation (henceforth EBC) finally emerged in 1619. Taking its cue from its Spanish and Cassinese roots, it would operate in a fairly centralized way, the president wielding more authority than the superiors or priors of the individual houses. Only gradually, over the following centuries, did the houses gain a full autonomy within the federation of the congregation.

In these early years there was a variety of work and a considerable level of mobility between the houses on the continent and the English and Welsh mission. Thus the monks might live in English gentry houses, serving as chaplains and ministering to the local Catholics, or they might live in

community on the continent. But there was the possibility of tension between conventuals, who argued that monks should live in monasteries, and missioners who felt that the conversion of England was the primary concern.[8] Members of religious orders on the continent were involved in the ecclesiastical life of Europe and thus were in a unique position to straddle the division between the English scene and continental Europe. This cosmopolitan factor is witnessed by the breadth of Baker's reading.

Women too found a place in the EBC, although their way of life was more strictly enclosed than that of the monks. The monastery of Our Lady of Comfort at Cambrai was opened in 1623. Baker produced his earliest spiritual writings whilst spiritual director at Cambrai.

It is with this recusant background in mind that I shall consider the life of Baker before moving on to the central concerns of the thesis.

II BAKER'S LIFE[9]

c) Baker's life: 1575-1596

David Baker[10] was born at Abergavenny on December 9th 1575, the thirteenth and youngest child of William Baker and his wife Maud Lewis. Leander Prichard, Baker's fellow Benedictine and first biographer, comments piously on David's position in the family: "therefore he may be likened to Benjamin, the youngest of Jacob's thirteen children and the type of contemplatives; *Benjamin in mentis excessu*, Psalm 67."[11] He was named after his uncle David Lewis, a lawyer and high civil servant under Elizabeth I. His father was steward of the lordship of Abergavenny, justice of the peace and sheriff of Monmouthshire.

In terms of religion, his parents were probably "church papists": they

had "accommodated themselves at least exteriorly to the common though schismaticall service of the land"[12] while retaining private Catholic sympathies. This ambivalent position undermined the zeal required to ensure a sound religious upbringing for their children. Nevertheless, William Baker spent time in "vocall prayers" and discreetly read "Latin Catholick authors."[13] As time went on, however, his Catholic sympathies cooled while his Protestant ones never warmed at all. Prichard describes Maud as "a good and Catholick gentlewoman, alwaies busy and doing."[14] If the religious influence of the parents was peripheral, they gave their children a good moral upbringing. Baker's own account is embellished with quaint details: he was not naturally inclined to drinking'[15] and "his nature brooked not the use of taking tobacco" although he greatly liked its smell.'[16]

His education up to the age of eleven was at the local free school which did not give him much religious sense beyond the mere awareness of there being a God. Then, just after his eleventh birthday, he was sent to London to "Christ Church, alias Greyfriars."[17] This school, founded by Henry VIII in 1547, still exists today as Christ's Hospital. Baker was sent there for better learning and to acquire proper English since the principal language in Abergavenny was Welsh. He arrived on February 8th 1587 (new style), the day on which the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots was executed at Fotheringhay. He describes the bonfires and celebrations in London as "most unworthy joy, odious to all truely pious hearts."[18]

The headmaster of Christ Church was a fervent Protestant: the scriptures were read at meals; the Book of Common Prayer was used; a psalm was sung each evening; church was attended on Sundays and holydays and learned sermons were preached. Despite his sectarian tone elsewhere, Baker acknowledges that his education was honest and moral and that he learned

good scholarship and good English and gained a sound knowledge of the bible. He describes some of the persecution of Catholic priests in 1587 and the alarm in 1588 at the prospect of the Armada. As a result of the latter, his father temporarily recalled him to Wales.

At the age of fifteen, knowing Latin and Greek and destined for the law, he was sent to Oxford. He arrived there in May 1590, became a member of Broadgates Hall[19] and studied under his kinsman, William Prichard MA, "a true and zealous protestant and an hearty anti-puritan."[20] Under Prichard he was given an English bible and was taught more elegant Latin. He also studied "arithmetick" and some "logick" to which he did not take. "Much less went he any further to philosophy."[21] Before long, however, he got into bad company and he describes with unexpected candour the hypocrisy and corruption in which he and his companions engaged. They abused the season of Lent and "glutted most of all on Good Friday."[22] But Baker was more repulsed in retrospect by the rampant homosexuality he found at the university, even if he may have indulged in it at the time. "The greatest corruption in our land, as to such abominable vice (besides that of fornication and drinking) cometh from the two universities of England, the which the enemy of mankind hath extremely corrupted in these daies of heresy with the forsaid most detestable vice."[23] He left his tutor and went to another college and continued his undisciplined life style. At the age of sixteen and a half, his parents called him home to Wales.

He now spent about four years at home and studied the law and legal French with his elder brother Richard (1557-1598). His father entered into marriage negotiations on his behalf with the guardians of "an inheretrix or heiresse of a good and fair estate in lands,"[24] but the plans came to nothing. His father and brother hoped that he would be ordained in the

established church and made efforts to secure for him the wealthy benefice of Llanwenarth. This too fell through. His religious position was sceptical and "tending more to a certain atheism."[25] He quotes two immediate causes of this scepticism: firstly, the sardonic tone of Erasmus' *Colloquies* and *Encomium Moriae*, which he read daily, and secondly, the "most terrene study" of law.[26]

It is at this point in his life that the prose autobiography ends, although a list of brief headings carry the story on to about 1606. Baker is now almost twenty-one years of age, and is about to depart to London for the second time, to study at the Inns of Court. The time is Michaelmas 1596.

I have dwelt in this section on the academic, religious and moral influences on Baker. A youth of twenty-one, he had had a broad education in the standard studies of the day. There is a candour in the tone of his autobiography, a straightforwardness and a balance. These qualities moderate the occasional shrillness of the retrospective convert. There is too a quirkiness and an eye for the unexpected detail. He emerges as a young man, loved and perhaps a little indulged by his family. He has no financial cares; in the background stand influential and solicitous patrons. He shows an intellectual curiosity. In the midst of this ease it is not surprising that, like many young people of his age, his religious sensibility should be so under-developed.

d) Baker's life: 1596-1605

Prichard's account of Baker's first twenty-one years contradicts the autobiography in some points of detail,[27] but the general gist is the same. I shall here follow Prichard's biography since it is the earliest.

Baker, by his own account, arrived at Clifford's Inn in late 1596. Although the study was harder than at Oxford, the more mature Baker took to it well. Prichard bears witness to his legal competence, his "great naturall witt,"[28] his assiduous and regular attendance at the bar and his increasing impatience with treason trials that seemed merely for the gratification of the Prince. As an interesting sidelight on these years, Prichard tells us that "his second sort of recreation was to resort to playes; whither yet he never went without a pocket book of the law, which he did read when the play or any sort of it pleased him not.[29] New plays being staged at this period (1596-99) included *Richard II*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Merchant of Venice*.[30]

In 1599, Baker's father obtained for him the recordership of Abergavenny; this gave him practical experience while he continued his legal studies. About the year 1600 a significant event occurred that shook his atheism. He was returning on horseback from some legal business when he absent-mindedly allowed his horse to walk onto a narrow plank bridge high above the flood stream of the River Monnow. In the middle of the bridge he realized the extreme danger of his position. The horse could go neither forward nor backwards. In panic he called on God "If ever I git out of this danger, I will believe there is a God who hath more care of my life and safty, then I have had of his service and worshipe."[31] Then he found "the horse's head was turned, and all was out of danger, both horse and man."[32] Whatever actually happened on this occasion, Baker saw it as a significant moment, and he began to study religion with greater receptivity. But even before the experience, he had "met with books that brought him to a sense and verity of beliefe as to religion."[33] It is clear that the "conversion" followed a period of brooding over the religious question.

Now he read widely in Catholic literature and sought even prohibited books in the London bookshops. Through his study "his reason and understanding was won to the truth yet was his will and affection more violently carried to love and embrace the Catholicke religion."[34] Three things in particular attracted him to Catholicism: the good discipline, the suffering of priests and layfolk on behalf of it and the whole-hearted commitment of its adherents. He was finally received into the Roman communion in May 1603 by a secular priest, Richard Floyd. With the zeal of the convert he attempted to persuade others to join him. "A great contempt of the world"[35] followed, and a desire for perfection and the religious state. His mind was now "altogether sett on a monasticall course."[36] On his next visit to London he arranged to meet some Benedictine fathers. Dom Justin McCann, the 20th century editor of several of Baker's works, suggests that the date may have been January 1605.[37] Baker would have been in his thirtieth year.

During the decade of his twenties, his primary concern was the study and practice of the law, a discipline that would influence his written style.[38] The accounts of his life suggest an honesty and a questing spirit. Despite the River Monnow experience, the main influence seems to have come through books, as is perhaps often the case with educated and intellectually curious people. Baker, it is clear, read widely and carefully and responded to what he read, whether Plautus and Erasmus or the prohibited Catholic books. The extent of his reading is confirmed by a glance at the index.[39] This point is important because it provides external evidence for my suggestion that Baker's spiritual writings reflect a considerable level of influence from a wide range of Catholic religious literature. I shall develop this in some detail in chapter 2 section m) which considers the

influences on Baker's spiritual teaching. He would give his own stamp, but his theology and anthropology would have much in common with many other writers.

e) Baker's life: 1605-1624

Baker had told his family that he was going to London on business, but his intention was to go abroad to become a religious. At this stage there were no English monasteries: as I mentioned in section b), Englishmen who wished to embrace the monastic life had to join foreign communities on the continent.[40] The first Benedictine missionaries from Italy and Spain had arrived in England in the spring of 1603. The monks whom Baker met in London in 1605, Dom Thomas Preston and Dom Anselm Beech, belonged to the Cassinese congregation, the main abbey of which was St Justina's in Padua. Baker was looking for a moderate order, with neither excessive austerities nor unmitigated pastoral work, so, accompanied by Preston, he left London at the end of February 1605. They reached Padua on April 20th.

Baker was clothed in the monastic habit on May 27th 1605. He tells us:

> My said cloathing day
> Was on the eve day
> Of White-Sunday,
> And the ensuing day
> Of Saint Austin's day,
> The Apostle of England,
> That is our native land.
> For which Saints sake
> I did on me take
> The like name of Augustin.[41]

Although his novice-master was kind, he received little spiritual instruction except for the Rule and a few other books. He thought in retrospect that books alone were not really sufficient for starting someone

on a spiritual course. Nevertheless, he rapidly realized for himself that God and perfection were to be sought through mental prayer[42] and not just through vocal prayer and choir attendance. He embraced mental prayer at the start of his noviciate, but he gave up a few weeks later, after a "desolation", an experience of futility and dryness in prayer. Now he resorted to the pattern of "externall regularities."[43] His fellow novices, the easy-going younger sons of Italian noblemen, were kind to him, but not surprisingly, he did not really feel part of it.

It was ill health that finally forced his departure from St Justina's, his noviciate incomplete. He would have delayed the home journey through Venice and Milan, had not a mysterious foreboding urged him to hurry. On arriving in London he heard that his father was dying. He reached the old man's side in time, and was delighted that he agreed to be reconciled to the Church. Unlike Hamlet's poor father, he died shriven, houseled and aneled.

Baker kept in close touch with his English brethren of the Italian Congregation and his legal knowledge proved of value to them. It was he, apparently, who pointed out the possibility of the rights and privileges of the pre-Reformation English Benedictines being passed on through an individual. The Cassinese monks had been in touch since 1603 with the last survivor of Marian Westminster, Dom Sigebert Buckley, and the legal transfer came to fruition in 1607.[44] The incident shows another side of Baker: his historical interests. The opening sections of his prose autobiography reveal him as someone fascinated by historical detail.[45] The EBC would use him later to conduct historical research for propagandist reasons. This would bring him into contact with Sir Robert Cotton, William Camden, John Selden and other great Anglican antiquarians.[46]

But Baker still sought a retired life. It was while living in the house of Sir Nicholas Fortescue in Worcestershire that he underwent "a passive contemplation."[47] This might be described as an experience whereby the subject, without any apparent effort of his or her own, is caught into a deep attentiveness to God. But it was short-lived and there was no one competent to help him to understand it. As at Padua, he slumped back into tepidity.[48] He even considered following the spiritual exercises of the Jesuits "which had bin a meer folly in him to have done, as himselfe afterwards plainly perceived."[49] It was around this time that he went to Rheims and was ordained priest. Outwardly he did effective pastoral work including the gaining of converts. In England he engaged in various activities, legal and otherwise. When the EBC was set up in 1619 to include all English Benedictine monks, Baker joined and became attached to the community of Dieulouard,[50] although he never actually lived there.

While residing at the Devonshire house of Philip Fursden he started the spiritual course of prayer that would last till his death. He experienced considerable ill health during his year in Devon. Then he felt an inner call to return to London and moved into Grays Inn Lane near the Inns of Court. It was at this period that he set about searching old records in an attempt to refute John Barnes's attack on the restored EBC.[51] The fruit of his researches was published at Douai in 1626 as *Apostolatus Benedictinorum in Anglia.*

The breach of treaty over the plans for the marriage of Prince Charles with the Infanta of Spain raised fears about a persecution of Catholics. As a result, Baker crossed to the continent. It was now the early summer of 1624. He went to the English Benedictine house of St Gregory at Douai where he was welcomed by Fr Rudesind Barlow, then president of the

EBC. It was from here, not many days later, that he was asked to go as confessor to the recently founded English Benedictine convent of Our Lady of Comfort at Cambrai.[52] He would stay at Cambrai for nine years and would gain there his first great experience of spiritual direction.

f) Baker's life: 1624-1641

The final part of Baker's life falls into three sections: the period at Cambrai, 1624-1633;[53] the residence at St Gregory's, Douai, 1633-1638; and the last years in England, 1638-1641.

A description of the early days of the community of Cambrai is given by the Benedictines of Stanbrook.[54] The young and enthusiastic Englishwomen who started the community petitioned the president of the EBC for a monk qualified to train them in Benedictine contemplative prayer: Fr Augustine Baker was sent. He found a receptive disciple in Dame Catherine Gascoigne, who would be appointed abbess in 1629 and remain in that post, apart from a short break, until 1673. Another disciple was Dame Gertrude More.[55] Many of the nuns of Cambrai found that through the instructions of Fr Baker they were led into a deeper experience of prayer. It is to this period that several of his spiritual writings may be assigned, finding their origin as conferences delivered to the community.

The Counter-Reformation and the Council of Trent had given rise to a spirit of renewal within the Catholic Church that affected the old religious orders and brought about the foundation of new ones. One outcome was the general favour towards the Jesuit method of discursive meditation, a method used even in many communities of nuns.[56] This method involved the imaginative pondering on, say, a gospel scene, which helped the subject to generate prayers and resolutions. It differed from that of Baker.[57] In 1629

general chapter appointed Fr Francis Hull as official chaplain to the Cambrai community, leaving Baker as spiritual director. The two men were temperamentally very different: Hull seems to have preferred discursive meditation and to have resented the extent of Baker's influence. The majority of the nuns supported Baker, but the situation was untenable. Both priests were called upon to explain their point of view at the chapter of 1633. A detailed investigation of Baker's manuscripts resulted in his teaching being fully vindicated. But the tension was such that neither could return to Cambrai; thus Baker began a period of residence at St Gregory's, Douai. Throughout he continued to enjoy the warm support of the Cambrai community. Interestingly, Fr Peter Salvin, a disciple and biographer of Baker, attended Francis Hull at his death bed in St Malo in 1645 and says that Hull repented his opposition to Baker.[58]

Baker's years at Douai saw him establishing a reputation as a spiritual director both within and beyond the community. It was not a particularly smooth and harmonious time and Prichard describes in detail some of the disagreements and arguments that occurred. The writings of this period differ in style from those written at Cambrai. "For those of Cambray (for the most part) were institutions or canons of a contemplative life; these of Doway, though they also treate of contemplation, yet proceed and insist much upon proving, reasoning, and arguing; and are much of that kind of writing which is called dissertation."[59]

It is not entirely clear why tension arose between Baker and the powerful Rudesind Barlow. The latter may have been jealous of Baker's success as a spiritual director and disturbed by the tactless enthusiasm of Baker's disciples.[60] Or he may have objected to the eccentricity of Baker's conventual observance.[61] The final break came when Barlow used Baker's

Treatise on the English Mission as a propaganda weapon against troublesome missionary monks. Baker resented being used and wrote a long introduction to the same work in which he bitterly attacked an unnamed conventual, a thinly disguised version of Barlow himself.[62]

The final outcome of all this was that Baker, although apparently ill, was forced to leave France for the English mission, accompanied by his disciples Leander Prichard and Peter Salvin. He was now in his sixties and his health was far from robust. As civil war approached, the situation in England would become increasingly tense, particularly for Catholic priests. Both Prichard and Salvin give touching details of the journey from Dunkirk.[63] They all had, of course, to travel in disguise. The old man kept forgetting himself and saying his prayers in an embarrassingly loud voice. "He also forgetting himselfe and the place and company, who were hereticks, called upon us by our names of Fa. Peter and Fa. Leander."[64] A rough ride in a wagon from Dover to Canterbury was followed by a journey on horseback to Gravesend, thence by boat to London.

In the capital he moved from place to place and his health fluctuated. He wrote nothing now except a few letters. The Cambrai community asked after him and he told Prichard to tell them that he was now "*totus in passionibus.*" By this he meant that his prayer was "wholly passive."[65] The last months included living in hiding and narrow escapes from the pursuivants. He died after a violent fever on August 9th 1641.

g) Baker's spiritual development

In the previous sections of the present chapter, I considered the events and influences surrounding Baker's life. It would be valuable now to look at the stages of his spiritual progress. He describes this in his

Secretum Sive Mysticum, the relevant sections of which have been published by Justin McCann.[66] In addition, his biographers make extensive comments on this aspect of his life.

We can, of course, approach his spiritual life only through the medium of the written language that he and others use about it. This language employs a number of terms with a technical or semi-technical meaning. Most of these terms are used metaphorically. All, I presume, refer to experiences that may be had today. Some, such as "acts", are still common parlance within modern Roman Catholicism. An investigation of Baker's language of prayer is not my central concern, although I shall look closely in chapter 4 at a pervasive model of the spiritual life that he uses. In the present section, as I describe his spiritual development, I shall quote terms that he and his contemporaries used and shall attempt, despite the difficulty, to give a brief working explanation of them. My explanations are not intended to suggest an evaluative stance on his experiences.

Cressy says that Baker underwent three conversions to mental prayer: the first was short-lived and occurred during his noviciate in Padua in 1605. The second began in England in 1608, and the third, also in England, in 1620.[67] Baker himself disregards the Padua experience and refers simply to his first and second conversions.

Padua provided him with little personal instruction in prayer. He felt intuitively, however, that vocal prayer and choir office needed to be supplemented by mental prayer.[68] He gave himself up to a process of mental prayer which lasted for a few weeks. A period of "aridity", an experience in which prayer seems futile or unattractive, brought it to an end, and there was no one to help him persevere. But he did learn from this experience: he began to realize the centrality of mental prayer for a religious life. He

saw that it could provide "illumination", a deeper insight into the mysterious workings of God, and could draw the will to him.[69] Cressy's account differs slightly: Baker used discursive meditation for two to three months but then found that he could no longer work in his imagination and understanding. What he needed was prayer of the will, but there was no one to show him how this was done.[70] Both Prichard and Cressy agree that, as a result of this confusion, he resorted to vocal prayers and exterior observances.

The second conversion occurred when Baker was in his thirty-second year and brought him to passive contemplation in about sixteen months.[71] This was while he was lodging in Worcestershire at the home of Sir Nicholas Fortescue, around 1607-1608. He began to pray for five or six hours a day, using "acts", short verbal prayers expressing, for example, contrition or adoration or thanksgiving. A month or two before the passive contemplation, he moved to "aspirations". Baker sometimes calls these "elevations" or "affections" or "inward stirrings of the spirit."[72] They are more spontaneous than "acts", are characterized by a greater longing for God and are believed to be more directly the work of the Holy Spirit. His process of prayer at this time was linked with an involuntary "mortification",[73] a stomach condition that prevented his eating while leaving him feeling hungry. An intense experience came one day at about 11 am. In this "God becometh the sole worker."[74] It lasted between seven and fifteen minutes and "it was with alienation from senses; I mean, in a rapt."[75] Here, presumably, he is referring to a mystical condition where the normal ways of perceiving and experiencing seem to be suspended and the person is entirely passive under the influence of God's presence. This had various effects. Firstly, it gave rise to "far purer prayer, far easier, less painful

to nature, and more abstract from sense."[76] Secondly, it brought illumination which enabled Baker to understand the deeper significance of the spiritual books he was reading. Thirdly, it brought a greater subjection of "sensuality" to the "superior will".[77] But this "rapt" was followed a day or two later by an experience of desolation with which Baker did not have the wherewithal to cope.

He remained in a lukewarm state for a further twelve years until about 1620. At this time he was probably living in Devonshire with the Fursdens.[78] The isolation enabled him to commit himself to daily prayer. He began with about three months of meditation and this was followed by a year or so in the exercise of immediate acts. Gradually his prayer became entirely aspirative.[79] He tells us, as he writes the *Secretum*, that he has continued in this prayer for nine years and five months.[80] He writes this autobiographical work in the third person and its composition can be dated to 1629, during his residence at Cambrai.

The prayer which he discusses in 1629 is an exercise of the will in which the imagination and the understanding have gradually been superseded. Initially, the will operates by "forcement" but later by interior impulse of "stirring".[81] The prayer of the will starts with acts and becomes aspirative. "Aspirations" are so called because "by them the soul doth seek and labour to get out of her inferior nature and to attain up to the height or top of the spirit where God more properly is and dwelleth to the end that she may be more perfectly united with him."[82] Baker tells us that his soul "did work and exercise (aspirations) forth and without the body."[83] "Afterward it seemed ... that his working came to draw towards and into the body. And first they came to the extreme parts of it, as into the hands and feet, and afterwards into the arms and legs."[84] This strange combination of

bodily and extra-bodily experiences causes Baker to make an uncharacteristic remark about possible philosophical problems: "I know not how my relation therein will stand with the common teaching of philosophers about the residence and working of a soul within a body."[85]

The conversion experience that began in 1620 raises a point of particular interest for my purposes in this thesis. The spiritual experiences related in the *Secretum* and described by Prichard and Cressy, clearly exemplify the process of growth in the spiritual life decribed in *Holy Wisdom.* In other words, Baker is not simply recounting the teaching of other spiritual people: his instructions are validated by his own experience. This is not the place to discuss in detail what has been decribed here. I shall consider in chapter 5 some of the problems raised by his anthropological assumptions. The focus of my interest is *Holy Wisdom*, but the account in the *Secretum* runs parallel to that in the digest and in some ways supplements it.

Whether or not Baker was a mystic must surely depend on how broadly or narrowly one defines the term. We can judge only on the basis of his formal writings and the witness of his contemporaries. In the last three years of his life he wrote nothing, but, under the pressures of sickness, insecurity and impending persecution, seems to have reached a condition of passive contemplation. His landlady, present at his last hours, confirmed that "perfect resignation and a total subjection to the will and good pleasure of Almighty God was plainly seen to be performed by him to his last breath."[86] David Knowles, a sharp critic of Baker, will conclude that he was not a mystic, because he confuses active and passive contemplation.[87] Certainly, his descriptions of aspirations, for example, are inconsistent as to the degree of passivity. The soul aspiring "to raise and elevate

herself"[89] and "the Holy Spirit ... completely and perfectly the fountain of (aspirations),"[90] suggest a confusion over the precise link between the activity and passivity of the soul. On the other hand, Justin McCann, probably the foremost Baker scholar, says that "mysticism is ... primarily and essentially a life"[30] and that the *Secretum* is "truly the autobiography of a mystic."[91] In chapter 2 I will consider and criticize some of the scholars who have written about Baker.

The vagueness of the term "mystic" makes it difficult to categorize Baker. Grace Jantzen argues that a dominant 20th century understanding of mysticism, derived from post-Kantian Idealism and Romanticism via the writings of William James and focussing on the subjective psychological states of the individual, stands in contrast to an older view. The older view, arising from a close consideration of paradigmatic mystics such as Bernard of Clairvaux and Julian of Norwich, suggests that mysticism pertains to a whole way of life centred on God.[92] This view accords with McCann's definition. Nevertheless, as Knowles has pointed out, the note of personal authority in *Holy Wisdom* diminishes as Baker describes the higher reaches of prayer.[93] Probably he did not go "as far" as a John of the Cross or a Teresa of Avila. But there is no denying that he was a man of prayer and a contemplative and that his teaching has helped many people over the centuries. The purpose of this thesis is not to assess the spiritual experience of Baker, however: it is, rather, to investigate the Christian anthropology that underlies *Holy Wisdom*. The preliminary discussion of his life serves to give perspective to that investigation.

III BAKER'S DISCIPLES

h) Baker's followers

We have already seen something of the warmth felt towards Baker by his disciples and first exponents: Prichard speaks of "my affection to Fa. Baker" and of his benefiting from Baker's teaching.[94] Salvin describes in personal terms the effect on him of meeting Baker: "he touched the very intime of my soul and imprinted thereon ... the whole substance of his advice."[95] He concludes his biography: Baker was "of a nature affable, courteous and faithfully constant to his friends ... and every way grateful and acceptable to all people that knew him."[96] Baker must have had many friends and followers both within the EBC and beyond. The community of Cambrai remained solidly loyal to "our venerable and deare Father Baker."[97] Many came to him for advice, including students of the English seminary and Franciscan friars.[98] Indeed, the seminary offered him a home when his Benedictine superiors were planning to send him away from Douai.[99] Teenaged students at St Gregory's became his spiritual disciples.[100] Another student, apparently unacquainted with Fr Baker, took him a rose; the encounter brought about the young man's conversion.[101]

These incidents are related by "Bakerists",[102] but there is no reason to doubt the substantial honesty of these men and women. It is clear that Baker had a devoted following, and that following could, at times, be indiscreet in its enthusiasm.[103] It is clear too that Baker's attractiveness arose from both his spiritual authority and his calm receptiveness. He seems to have been less intrusive and more "laid-back" than many spiritual directors of the period. This, of course, is not to deny his eccentricity and idiorhythmic life-style.

After this brief glance at Baker's contemporary spiritual influence,

we must now discuss the man who would perhaps be his most important follower, Fr Serenus Cressy, the creator of *Sancta Sophia*.

i) Serenus Cressy

Sancta Sophia or *Holy Wisdom* was the work of Serenus Cressy. Although its content is Baker's, its systematic nature and its form are Cressy's. We thus need to consider Cressy and his relationship with Baker. In this section I shall present the main events of his life, glance at his link with the Great Tew circle and conclude with some comments on his literary style. The purpose of the thesis is to consider the anthropology of *Holy Wisdom* and that is essentially Baker's. Thus, my comments on his editor will be summary and largely derivative.

Hugh Paulinus Cressy, Serenus in religion, was a Yorkshireman, born in 1605, the son of Hugh Cressy, a counsellor of Lincoln's Inn.[104] He was educated locally before being sent to Oxford in 1619. Four years later he graduated BA and subsequently MA. A fellowship of Merton followed in 1627 and, having received Anglican orders, he became chaplain to Thomas, Lord Wentworth. Later he was chaplain to Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland whom he accompanied to Ireland in 1638, where he was made dean of Leighlin. He returned with his patron to England in 1639 and was made a canon of Windsor. In the mid 1640s he toured Europe as guardian to Charles Berkeley, afterwards Lord Falmouth. As a result of inquiring into the beliefs and practices of the Roman Church, he renounced his protestantism in Rome in 1646. Returning to Paris, he studied at the Sorbonne under Henry Holden and the following year published his *Exomologesis*, an account of his conversion.

After considering joining the Carthusians of Nieuport, he decided to opt for the Benedictines so as to have the opportunity of defending

Catholicism with his writings. He entered the noviciate at St Gregory's, Douai, and was professed in 1649. He led the monastic life on the continent till the late 1650s; this period included a spell as chaplain to the English Benedictine nuns of Paris who included among their number two of the sisters of Lucius Cary. During this continental period he completed *Sancta Sophia*, which was published at Douai in 1657. Sent on the English mission, he was a chaplain to Queen Catherine of Braganza, residing at Somerset House and publishing several apologetic, historical and devotional works. In these years his former Anglican acquaintances found him reserved and almost melancholic, due, it is suggested, to "his solely giving himself up to religion, the refinedness of his soul, and the avoiding of all matters relating to humane and profane learning, as vanities."[105] He died at the recusant household of Richard Caryll at East Grinstead on August 10th 1674.

In the years prior to his conversion to Catholicism, Cressy mixed on equal terms with the most intellectually able of his time. He was a member of the Great Tew circle of Lucius Cary which included such men as Edward Hyde, Gilbert Sheldon, George Morley, Henry Hammond and William Chillingworth all of whom would become important figures in the political or ecclesiastical life of the country. Other members were Thomas Hobbes, John Suckling the poet and possibly Ben Jonson. The circle was characterized by an open-mindedness and an intellectual liveliness. A recent assessment of the Great Tew Circle describes it as "a remarkably coherent group of men with clear and consistent ideas" which included a critical royalism, an unclerical Arminianism and a philosophical rationalism.[106]

According to Trevor-Roper, Cressy "lost the hope which had once sustained the Great Tew fraternity;"[107] he could not cope with the scepticism and uncertainties which surrounded the Church of England and

"like many other weak brethren, he crept into the warmer bosom of the Church of Rome."[108] Lunn, more sympathetically, suggests that Cressy was fleeing from "the effects of unfettered reason."[109] Despite his abhorrence of Cressy's "odious alteration", Hyde, now earl of Clarendon, still described him many years later as "an old friend ... with whom I have been acquainted nearly fifty years."[110] Nevertheless Cressy's sharp repudiation of Great Tew in 1672 drew a bitter reaction from Clarendon: he spoke of "the melancholic and irresolution in his nature (which) prevailed with him to bid farewell to his own reason."[111]

Trevor-Roper sees Cressy's conversion to Rome as an apostasy, but gives no attention to Cressy's contemplative leanings which would find scope only in the teachings of Fr Baker. Unlike other converts (such as Lucius Cary's younger brothers Henry and Patrick), Cressy would stay faithful to his new religion and not be drawn back by the prospect of preferment within the Established Church. Trevor-Roper's view betrays a lack of sympathy for what mattered most to Cressy and Baker.[112] I would adopt the balanced view and see Cressy not as a weak apostate nor as a great contemplative but as a man trying to follow his conscience into a way of life most suited to his personality.

Before leaving Baker's editor we should glance at his literary abilities and output.[113] Cressy's work falls into three main categories: controversial, narrative or biographical and historical. His apologia, the *Exomologesis* (1647), has been characterized as showing "a cumbrous prolixity: when preparing the ground for argument his prose spreads into a thicket of qualifying clauses amid which his meaning can be all too easily lost."[114] There is, however, an improvement in clarity in his later works. But still, "though his work becomes much livelier after 1660 his fondness

for parenthetical qualification often leads him into irregular constructions and confusing arrangements."[115] Steuert's conclusion on Cressy's style is that his works remained disorderly and unwieldy with long and complex sentences. But there is "a candour and earnestness ... which preserves them from mediocrity."[116]

So Baker had a not unworthy editor in Serenus Cressy. Starting his adult life among an intellectually brilliant circle, the intimate associate of the politically and ecclesiastically influential, he would move from his position within the establishment into a path to conversion that would never be entirely understood or appreciated by his former friends. Thus there would remain an ambivalence in their attitude towards him. Yet he would give "currency to the public image of the courtly Benedictine"[117] and would feature as such in Joseph Shorthouse's novel, *John Inglesant*, a 19th century apologia for Anglicanism.[118]

Cressy became a well-known writer and was chosen to produce the digest of Baker's spiritual teaching. His credentials were excellent: his *Exomologesis* had earned him a high reputation among Catholics and, despite the stylistic matters mentioned above, he had a sharp mind and sober judgment.[119] In addition he was highly sympathetic to Baker's spiritual teaching. Of all the lives of Baker, his, the only one known throughout the years since its composition, was written "most methodically"[120] and with a less overt sense of personal commitment than the others. It was his interest in contemplative matters that preserved for posterity some of the works of the medieval mystics.[121] So successful was his project of editing Baker that despite his eradicating the repetitiveness, systematizing the unruliness and smoothing the homeliness of Baker's own style, the theology,

philosophy and anthropology are Baker's. Thus, we may allow the editor to fade away, as he would certainly have wished.

j) Conclusion

If a critical study of *Holy Wisdom* requires justification, then the present chapter will have provided some. Neither Baker nor Cressy were marginal figures. They came from the educated and influential classes of Elizabethan and Jacobean Britain; they retained links with those classes, even after conversion to Catholicism. In addition, their experience of Catholic Europe gave them a breadth of vision so that there was no real danger of their being narrowly insular or nationalistic. Their historical interests saw them drawing on English medieval texts and MSS and transmitting the writings of the 14th century mystics. Thus they are important men, not just in recusant circles. From a purely historical point of view, there is value in a close study of the book by which they are known to posterity.

My primary interest is not the historical, however: the present chapter has set the scene, provided the context and presented Baker as a man of his time. But Baker is more than that: David Lunn calls him "a free spirit, a universal figure, who belongs to all ages and all creeds."[122] If this judgement is rather sweeping, it encapsulates a truth. Baker's life has influenced succeeding generations of God-seekers, but more influential has been the digest of his teaching. Thus to *Holy Wisdom* we now turn.

SANCTA

SOPHIA.

OR

DIRECTIONS FOR THE PRAYER OF

CONTEMPLATION &c.

Extracted out of more then XL. Treatiſes written by the late Ven. Father

F. AVGVSTIN BAKER,

A Monke of the Engliſh Congregation of the Holy Order of

S. BENEDICT:

And Methodically digeſted by the

R. F. SERENVS CRESSY,

Of the ſame Order and Congregation.

And printed at the Charges of the Conuent of

S. GREGORIES

IN DOWAY.

VOL. I.

AT DOWAY;

By IOHN PATTE', and THOMAS FIEVET.

ANNO D. M.DC.LVII.

1657

Title page of the 1st edition of *Sancta Sophia*

CHAPTER 2

"THIS IS OUR VENERABLE AUTHOR'S DOCTRINE"[1]

HOLY WISDOM

a) Introduction

Having set the historical and biographical scene, my purpose in the present chapter is to consider *Holy Wisdom* from an external point of view. A close textual analysis will be conducted later in chapters 4, 5 and 6. The present chapter is divided into three main parts. Part I deals with the emergence of *Holy Wisdom*, its structure and its subsequent history; part II looks at various critical responses to the work; part III deals with its relevance and sources. Part III is particularly important because it supports my claim that *Holy Wisdom* deserves a detailed critical investigation.

I THE EMERGENCE AND HISTORY OF THE TEXT

b) Baker's writings

The years of Baker's literary creativity fall into two periods corresponding to his residence at Cambrai (1628-1633) and at Douai (1633-1638).[2] The treatises of the Cambrai period tend to be generally short and are a "loosely connected series of 'advices' for (the nuns') spiritual course."[3] They are constructed by a method of addition. The Douai treatises, on the other hand, are long and more carefully planned. The difference is to be explained in terms of Baker's situation in each of these two periods. At Cambrai he was actively directing a community of nuns and responding to

needs as they arose. At Douai, although directing individuals, he was writing from a more theoretical standpoint. The common theme of Baker's treatises is the practice of prayer.

All scholars of the manuscripts agree on the weaknesses of his style: it is characterized by "the utmost prolixity and discursiveness", "repetition" and a "character of tediousness."[4] "It has to be emphasized that Baker was at times exceedingly tortuous, tediously repetitive and sometimes unintelligible. It is not unusual to find sentences of over 150 words in length."[5] "Baker was not exactly a master of English prose."[6] It appears that he was quite aware of his stylistic shortcomings and his lawyer's tendency to qualify and requalify: when asked by a friend to clarify a passage he replied that "to be prolix was his fault in all his writings" and that he wished he could have been briefer.[7] In his treatise on the Rule he admits: "I know I am oft times long and tedious, if not superfluous in some of my discourse: but it is my manner and I can do no better."[8] Nevertheless, there is also a "homeliness ... salted with English proverbs"[9] and in the early treatises he is capable of "a terse and direct English."[10] McCann sums up: "In the most general terms, it may be said that the Cambray treatises are unsuitable for publication mainly on the score of their form, the Douay treatises on the score of their style."[11]

Many Baker manuscripts are extant. In 1933 McCann provided a descriptive list of the known MSS.[12] They contain mainly spiritual and ascetical works but include also biography, history and translations. In that year he knew of 190 MSS, but by 1958 had uncovered the existence of another ten.[13] In his 1974 statement on the state of Baker studies, McCann's successor, Placid Spearritt, described a further ten that had been found since 1958.[14] Nor is that the end of the tally: the Osborn Collection of

Yale University Library acquired a Baker MS in 1975[15] and a "hitherto unnoticed autograph MS" was bought by Downside Abbey in 1983.[16]

In view of the piecemeal discovery of Baker MSS and the fact that several, including autographs and the early biographies of Baker by Prichard and Salvin, have turned up only in the present century, it would be unreasonable to believe that the collection is complete. The French Revolution inflicted suffering on the English religious communities on the continent and saw the disappearance of many of their books and MSS. The original MSS at Cambrai, which Abbess Catherine Gascoigne had guarded with such tenacity in the 17th century, were lost when the community fled to England in the last years of the 18th. Fortunately, they survive in early copies.

The bulk of Baker's work survives. There are some autographs, but most of the MSS are copies made by 17th century disciples. It would be possible to produce a critical edition of Baker's work, but the enterprise would be vast in extent and the product would have little popular as opposed to scholarly appeal. The lack of such an edition makes a systematic discussion of Baker's theology and spirituality difficult if not impossible.

Nevertheless, besides the special case of *Holy Wisdom*, several writings of Baker have been published.[17] An investigation of these reveals a close agreement with *Holy Wisdom* in matters theological, anthropological and spiritual. These works include Baker's autobiography and *Rythms*, the autobiographical sections of his *Secretum Sive Mysticum*,[18] his commentary on the *Cloud of Unknowing*, his life of Dame Gertrude More, "Of Finding God within the Soul" and *The Substance of the Rule of St Bennet*.[19] There are also collections of affective prayers by Baker, some wrongly attributed to Gertrude More[20] and various abridgements of his teaching, based on *Holy*

Wisdom.[21] All these, however, represent a very small proportion of his total output.

These writings are not directly relevant to my purposes in this thesis, except insofar as forty of them were digested by Serenus Cressy to produce *Holy Wisdom*.[22] It would be a task of value to explore in detail Cressy's editorial process. A small amount of work on this has been done.[23] But again, such a task is not directly relevant to my purpose, which is to criticize *Holy Wisdom* as we have it. A glance at its roots in Baker's own literary achievement serves to provide a necessary context.

c) The genesis of Holy Wisdom

As we have seen, Baker was a controversial figure in his lifetime. His very presence polarized opinions. He was quite clearly a gifted spiritual director and a man of prayer who engendered great warmth and affection on the part of his disciples and friends. On the other hand, he was eccentric in his way of living. A glance through the biographies by his disciples reveals many chapters of special pleading and explanation. He stopped saying daily mass;[24] he did not eat in the refectory nor wear the monastic habit.[25] The singularity of an isolated individual in a community may be treated with bemused tolerance. But when such an individual becomes the centre of a group of followers, that person may become vaguely threatening. Baker's biographers suggest that he had no intention of forming factions; his followers were, nevertheless, labelled "Bakerists" by their opponents.[26] There is no doubt that during his lifetime, Baker was considered subversive.

His writings contained ideas that might have been held in suspicion by the authorities: there was an emphasis on interior prayer of the will which ran counter to the prevailing tendency to use discursive meditation.

There was his teaching on divine inspiration, which Knowles calls "perhaps the most original part of his work."[27] A suspicious mind might have seen this as tending to subvert the authority of external superiors. There was a lack of emphasis on the sacraments.[28] Already his teaching had come under critical scrutiny in his clash with Fr Francis Hull. He submitted his writings for judgement in 1629 and they were warmly approved by Frs Leander Jones and Rudesind Barlow.[29] They were again vindicated at the general chapter of 1633.[30]

After his death the early biographies began to appear and his disciples started to copy his manuscripts. In 1649 Placid Gascoigne, brother of the abbess of Cambrai, was elected president of the Congregation. He was sympathetic to Baker. Under his direction the general chapter of 1653 commissioned Fr Serenus Cressy to produce a digest.[31] This digest was to be examined by the incoming president, Fr Claude White, and several others. In fact, it was not published until 1657, under the presidency of White's successor, Fr Laurence Reyner.

There must still have been doubts as to the orthodoxy of Baker's writings. In 1655 White attempted to gain possession of the Cambrai MSS. He was vigorously resisted by Abbess Catherine Gascoigne. She writes desperately to Fr Augustine Conyers on March 3rd 1655: "The books are declared to containe poysonous, pernicious and diabolicall doctrine, myself in a damnable way running to perdition ..."[32] It seems that Rudesind Barlow was involved in this attempt. A letter from the chaplain at Cambrai, Fr William Walgrave, states: "Our old grandsir is crafty and crewell, God forgive him. He it is that is secretly the motor and promotor of all these turbulent affayres to effect his owene designs."[33] Ironically, Barlow had been a supporter of Baker on the latter's arrival in Douai in 1624, had sent

him to Cambrai as spiritual director of the nuns and had approved his writings in 1633. But relations had soured and some of Baker's later MSS had attacked him.[34] Lunn suggests that what the Benedictine superiors were really resisting was a contemplative movement within the Congregation that threatened the English mission.[35] The unanimous backing of the digest project was "a clever move by Barlow and his associates to come to terms with the *cultus*, and make it safe, by producing an authorised version of Baker's teaching."[36] Fortunately for the Bakerists, White died in 1655, Barlow in 1656, the Cambrai MSS were not handed over and *Sancta Sophia* was published in 1657.

d) The structure of Holy Wisdom

The first edition of *Sancta Sophia or Directions for the Prayer of Contemplation &c* was published in two volumes by John Patte and Thomas Fievet at Douai in 1657. The title page claims that the work was "extracted out of more then XL treatises written by the late Ven. Father F. Augustin Baker ... and methodically digested by the R. F. Serenus Cressy." It opens with an address to Fr Laurence Reyner and the superiors of the Congregation, dated July 21st 1657 and commending the work to their favour. In this address Cressy admits that "the paines herein taken will appeare to be not very ordinary, to any one that shall consider how difficult a matter it is out of such a world of Treatises (written ... without any eye or designe in the Authour of affording materials for an entire Body of Spirituality) to frame such a Body not at all defective, and with parts not unproportionable."[37] And he says later that his effort in the task was partly due to gratitude, because Baker's teaching had drawn him to both the Catholic Church and the Benedictine life.

There follows an imprimatur in Latin, dated May 4th 1657 and given by President Reyner and nihil obstats by Frs Benedict Stapleton and Leander a S. Augustino. Then there are approbations by two regius professors of theology in the University of Douai, by the episcopal censor of books and by a professor of theology at the English seminary at Douai. Lastly and most touchingly, Cressy prints a personal letter from Abbess Catherine Gascoigne, Baker's courageous defender. She acknowledges the working and reworking that Cressy has done "to give the more full satisfaction in rendering your abridgement most entirely conformable to his writings in the very expression, as much as might be." She concludes: "since not any that hath read your booke, and is versed in the authours workes; have found any objections to make, either of anything wanting or differing from him: but all acknowledge that you have most faithfully, clearely and substantially delivered his doctrine."[38]

After these commendations, Cressy addresses a preface to the reader in which he deals with possible objections to the publication of the work. Then the actual text begins. It is divided into three treatises. Volume 1 contains the first, 235 pages in length, entitled "Of an internal life in general" and the second, 220 pages, "Of mortification". Volume 2 opens with a short letter of commendation to the abbess and community of Cambrai and continues with the third treatise, 304 pages in length, entitled "Of prayer". This is followed by an advertisement to the reader apologizing for the absence of certain appendices that had been promised. Instead, Cressy prints approbations of many of Baker's MS treatises, given by Frs Leander Jones and Rudesind Barlow and dated 1629, 1630 and 1634. These are followed by a memorial written by Jones and forming perhaps the earliest discussion of Baker's theology. The last part of this volume includes 145 pages of devout

exercises, short prayers, ejaculations and considerations to help "immediate acts and affections of the will". Cressy concludes the work with a brief index.

e) The subsequent history

We have already seen, in the previous sections, something of how the work was received. Lunn, who likes to bring forward the eccentricities of the characters he is discussing,[39] is anxious to underline the differences between *Holy Wisdom* and Baker's own writings. For him Baker is a hero of individualism in the restrictive environment of monastic conformity.[40] Nevertheless, he acknowledges that Catherine Gascoigne herself, "ye chief spiritual daughter of R. F. Aug. Baker,"[41] was fully satisfied with the work, as were the other Bakerists.[42] Placid Spearritt accords with the abbess while holding that the digest is "not an adequate source for studying the more controverted elements of his doctrine."[43] But for posterity, Baker's spiritual doctrine is contained in *Holy Wisdom*, however different the form might be from that of his own writings.

Holy Wisdom was duly published in 1657, but remnants of doubt about his teaching must have remained. In 1676 Catherine Gascoigne asked the president, Benedict Stapylton, for "a new confirmation of ye works of Fa. Baker."[44] Stapylton complied and acknowledged "ye great advantages wch have accrued both to yr happy community & ye whole Congrn by ye practise of yt doctrine."[45] He states that the authorized "collection or epitome ... was also confirmed by ye Gral Chapter, held at Paris in ye year 1657."[46] Weldon tells us that "many devout & learn'd writers as well French, as others have made large citations out of Fa. Baker's books."[47]

The Quietist controversy, associated with such men and women as

Molinos (c 1640-97), Madame Guyon (1648-1717) and Fénelon (1651-1715), emerged well after Baker's death. Quietism was condemned in the person of Molinos by Innocent XI in 1687.[48] Although Baker's teaching cannot be seen as incipient Quietism, the condemnation cast a shadow on contemplation.[49] Thus his popularity waned in the 18th century when apostolic work took the fore in the EBC.[50]

The spirituality of the English Benedictines in the 18th century has been ably discussed by Geoffrey Scott.[51] He acknowledges the general decline in Bakerism while pointing out, for example, the establishment of educational bursaries at the English Benedictine monastery of Lambspring which carried the condition that the beneficiaries should be schooled in Bakerism;[52] this practice had fallen into disuse by 1728, however.[53] Benedictine spirituality in that century seems to have been somewhat eclectic.

Holy Wisdom itself was not reprinted until 1857 when a New York edition was published by Edward Dunigan and Brother. The short preface to this edition quotes the English Benedictine Bishop Ullathorne (1806-89) who says of the work "nothing is more clear, simple, solid, or profound."[54] The unnamed editor refers also to "the respect with which our older ascetical writers cite it."[55] This edition gave only the text and omitted the commendations, prefaces and acts of the 1657. An English edition appeared in 1876, edited by Dom Norbert Sweeney.[56] This was a full version of the 1657 edition.

The closing decades of the 19th century saw a surge of interest in Baker, particularly at Belmont, the common noviciate house. This even included the copying of Baker MSS.[57] The period saw the publication of works based on *Holy Wisdom*[58] and, in 1911, a new edition of the 1876

version. In this the name *Holy Wisdom* is used for the first time. The most recent version is that of Gerard Sitwell which includes merely the text with an introduction.[59]

II RESPONSES TO *HOLY WISDOM*

f) Previous work on Baker

Previous work on Baker falls into four main types. Firstly, there is the apologetic. This is characterized by Leander Jones, Cressy and, in the 19th century, Bishop Cuthbert Hedley. None of these writers is entirely systematic. The essential purpose of each is to defend the more controversial aspects of Baker's writing (their defences are explicitly associated with *Holy Wisdom*) and hence the theological discussion is piecemeal.

Secondly, there is discussion of Baker from the point of view of mystical theology. Representatives of this approach include David Knowles and E. I. Watkin. Once again they focus on particular aspects of the teaching and tone of *Holy Wisdom*. Thirdly, there is an approach that is carefully and cautiously textual and which tends to focus on the MSS. Exponents of this include Justin McCann and Placid Spearritt. Finally there is the work that is primarily historical. This would characterize the writing of David Lunn.

The only full-scale monograph on Baker, that of Anthony Low, tends to be expository rather than critical. He sketches the historical and literary background and discusses the main themes of Baker's published writings.

Needless to say, my pigeon-holing of the Baker critics oversimplifies matters: there is considerable overlap. Knowles, for instance, as one might

expect, shows sensitivity to the historical setting; Hedley dwells on mystical themes; McCann has written much on the history. Although some of these writers are critical of Baker, Lunn's claim that "most experts on Baker are ... tigerish Bakerites"[60] is not entirely without foundation. All start from an appreciation, if not reverence, for the master. All feel that he is worth recommending to would-be seekers of the contemplative way. Some have already glanced at themes that I shall develop more systematically in this thesis, particularly those associated with the community dimension.[61] No writer to date, however, has addressed him or herself to a critique of the Christian anthropology of *Holy Wisdom*, even less of the Baker MSS. Most, indeed, take for granted in their own comments the anthropology which Baker is assuming.

There is not space to discuss everyone who has written about Baker. Several of the writings are popularizing and adulatory;[62] others dwell on a narrow or specific point.[63]. What I will do is to survey briefly a selection of the most important discussions of Baker, ones that focus on the teaching of *Holy Wisdom* in general.

The purpose of this survey is three-fold: firstly, to underline the relevance of *Holy Wisdom*. From its publication up to the present time, it has been viewed with seriousness and recommended as valuable spiritual teaching. Secondly, to emphasize its position within orthodox Catholic spirituality: all critics agree that it is neither suspect nor marginal; its teachings are shared by many others and it may therefore be taken as representative. Thirdly, to identify the levels at which it has been criticized. All this will lend support to my claim that *Holy Wisdom* is an important text, well worth detailed critical study, and will clarify the originality of my own critical approach.

My selection will include Baker's contemporaries, Leander Jones and Serenus Cressy (c 1635 and 1657 respectively), Cuthbert Hedley (1876), David Knowles (1927 and 1961) and Anthony Low (1970). Important Baker scholars such as McCann and Spearritt, and the EBC historian Lunn, are omitted because of their predominantly historical or textual slant.

g) 17th century responses: Leander Jones and Serenus Cressy

Fr Leander Jones, one of the most attractive figures of the early days of the EBC and its first president-general, wrote a sympathetic memorial in response to several of Baker's spiritual treatises.[64] This was produced shortly before 1635 and printed by Cressy at the end of *Holy Wisdom*.[65]

Jones' anthropological stance is very much the same as Baker's: "In this life our frail and weak body hindereth our soul;"[66] he plainly favours "a spiritualizing of the soul by adhering to God, and transcending all creatures."[67] The feminine pronoun is used for the soul: "if the director perceive a soul to be so wary, that she is perpetually careful of progress in spirit ..."[68] Jones discusses several of Baker's themes that he considers to be potentially controversial. He mentions the role of conventual duties, especially the office, confession and the problems of scrupulosity, the examination of conscience, meditation on the Passion, passive contemplation, the work of God being immediate rather than in the powers of the soul and, finally, the role of a spiritual director. I will discuss most of these issues in chapter 6. The fact that Baker's contemporary felt the need to defend him by stating a more nuanced view of his teaching in these areas, indicates that his views were open to interpretations less than acceptable to the expectations of his contemporaries. In other words, although Jones

defends as thoroughly orthodox Baker's teaching on the communal dimension of the human person, he acknowledges that it is open to misunderstanding. I will argue in chapter 6 that Baker's understanding of this dimension is less than adequate from my incarnational stance. Jones' unease anticipates, to some extent, my more extensive critique.

On the other hand, with regard to the theory of the person as an individual, Jones takes for granted the assumptions that underlie Baker's teaching. Thus Baker's views in this important area may be taken as generally representative.

Cressy, as we might expect, is unequivocally in favour of Baker's teaching and he recommends *Holy Wisdom* in an extended preface, presumably written in 1657.[69] He refers to the book's "immaculate doctrine"[70] and at one point invokes the authority of Castaniza's *Spiritual Conflict*.[71] He too uses feminine language for the soul and assumes the same anthropological position.[72] The objections he handles are those associated with Baker's teaching on inspirations. He argues that even certain learned Jesuits have written independently on affective prayer in a vein similar to that of Baker and concludes that "here ... is no manner of covert indirect meaning or design ... to broach any bold new-fangled inventions."[73]

In conclusion, Baker's contemporaries found his understanding of the human person as an individual entirely unexceptionable. Were his teaching on this subject at all eccentric, they would certainly have attempted to deal with it. His views on the social life of the Christian, dealing with themes such as community prayer and obedience, provided the area that needed some commentary and explanation. But even here Jones and Cressy were satisfied that Baker was entirely orthodox. It is important for my purposes that Baker's contemporaries should, at the end of the day, find his teaching unex

ceptionable and, indeed, worthy of warm commendation. Thus an attack on Baker's anthropology is an attack on a view-point that his contemporaries take for granted.

h) A 19th century response: Cuthbert Hedley

In 1876, Cuthbert Hedley[74] wrote a long review article on the newly published edition of *Holy Wisdom*, edited by Norbert Sweeney.[75] It was Hedley's contention that "the very aim of the teaching of Father Baker and of his school (is) that 'extraordinary' prayer should be the ordinary state for Christian souls."[76] He argued that Baker's teaching on prayer "is ... completely in accord with the classic fathers and mystical writers."[77]

Hedley agrees with the fundamentals of Baker's anthropology and with the spiritualizing tone of *Holy Wisdom:* "our fellow creatures are our greatest distractions;"[78] we must move beyond the sensual imagination to "purer and more serene images" and "the steady view of spiritual beauty."[79] He makes little or no comment on the social aspects of Baker's teaching but considers his supposed undervaluing of the understanding,[80] the imagination[81] and "the sacred humanity of Our Lord."[82] Hedley attempts to give a view more nuanced than Baker's, but at the end of the day, he is in agreement with Baker. He concludes his defence by arguing that Baker must not be seen as an ur-Molinist.[83] For him *Holy Wisdom* "is at once the most considerable and the most excellent survival of an epoch which was distinguished by a revival of spirituality of a very marked character."[84]

Hedley's defence of Baker is lucid, scholarly and sensitive to issues of concern. While there are comments that suggest integration of the human person - he talks at one point, for instance, of the unity of the soul's activity[85] - his own position is similar to Baker's. Like Jones and Cressy,

Hedley, writing over two centuries later, accepts that in his anthropology Baker is entirely unexceptionable.

i) A 20th century response: David Knowles

David Knowles, a great historian of medieval monasticism as well as a writer on mystical topics, dealt with Baker in two books, separated by a period of thirty-four years.[86] The earlier work points out the way in which Baker sums up fundamental strands of spiritual tradition: Baker "was saturated with the thought of his predecessors, and his teaching comprehends and supplements theirs to an extraordinary degree".[87] Knowles points out with distaste Baker's unusual monastic observance and finds in this some explanation for his unsatisfactory attitude to the social side of Christian life. He finds three aspects of *Holy Wisdom* as being "pre-eminently valuable":[88] internal inspirations, mortification and the prayer of forced acts. But his overall impression is that *Holy Wisdom* is "entirely colourless" with an "entire absence of warmth"[89] and that Baker himself has "a cold outlook."[90]

The later work re-emphasizes the important position of *Holy Wisdom* in the tradition and gives a detailed list of the various spiritual strands that meet in Baker.[91] Knowles is dubious as to whether Baker was a true mystic and concludes "it is hard to see how ... we can give a clear and affirmative answer to the question."[92] Once again he singles out mortification, divine inspiration and the first degrees of mental prayer as worthy of further comment. But, as before, Baker is seen as giving "an impression of queerness"; he is "a man with whimsies and corners, a humourless man."[93] Despite the critical tone towards some aspects, however, Knowles is generally favourable and concludes that *Holy Wisdom* "is indeed a

book of power."[94]

Knowles' impression of Baker the man is jaundiced, as should be clear in the light of what I have said in the previous chapter. To call Baker "humourless" is entirely unfair and perhaps says more about Knowles than about Baker. Knowles' three concluding criticisms of *Holy Wisdom* are that it is too long, that it is too dour and sunless and that it shows confusion over the degrees of the spiritual life. The first criticism is trivial and the second inaccurate. If the third has some elements of truth - *Holy Wisdom* does, for instance, skip over the prayer of quiet[95] - it is still characterized by a certain narrowness of judgment. For Knowles, Baker is inadequate because he does not exactly reproduce the teaching of John of the Cross. Yet we might argue that there is something doctrinaire, perhaps even arbitrary, in making the Carmelite *the* central criterion for acceptable teaching on the higher reaches of prayer.

Baker's early commentators had already appreciated that his views on the social side of the Christian life had a controversial element. Knowles, rightly, raises the subject again. But, like his predecessors, he has nothing to say against the anthropological stance of his subject. When all is said and done, Knowles too is arguing from within a framework of traditional anthropological assumptions, and even from that perspective his portrayal of Baker is impressionistic and insufficiently sensitive to the actual text of *Holy Wisdom*.

j) A second 20th century response: Anthony Low

Anthony Low's book *Augustine Baker*, was the first and is so far the only full-length monograph to appear on the subject.[96] He situates Baker in his literary and historical context, but deals purely with *Holy Wisdom* and

the other published works. His response to Baker is entirely favourable and he finds virtually nothing to criticize in the master's writing. For him Baker shows "the mark of a genius ... his ability to rise above the preoccupations of his time and culture, to produce something new or to revive something forgotten."[97] Nevertheless, "none of Baker's ideas about spirituality or mysticism are novel or unorthodox."[98] For Low as for Knowles, Baker is the heir of a rich tradition: he is neither marginal nor eccentric. He lies "in the central tradition of English mysticism"[99] and is also the "beneficiary and agent" of the many spiritual works appearing on the continent in the 16th and early 17th centuries.[100]

Low's concern is to expound and defend rather than to criticize: he considers Baker's use of the scholastic commonplaces of faculty psychology. But his own line mirrors that of Baker: he is happy to talk the language of the "spiritualizing process".[101] Low too, like all his predecessors, takes for granted the admissibility of what we might now call a standard anthropology of the spiritual life. Like Jones and Cressy he is aware of possible problems with Baker's teaching on the social dimension and, like them, he resolves such problems to his satisfaction. He has no doubts about the relevance and value of Baker for men and women of today.[102] He could be considered one of Lunn's "tigerish Bakerites".

k) Responses to Baker: conclusion

This brief survey of some of the critical responses to Baker yields several conclusions. Most importantly, none of the commentators sees any problems with the basic understanding of the human person which underlies *Holy Wisdom*. This is not surprising because all of them write from within the same tradition as Baker. They are not submitting the tradition itself to

critical assessment. This might encourage us to doubt the objectivity of their judgments; but such doubt would be ill-founded. The tone of each is marked by honesty and a sensitivity to the ways in which the ordinary reader might react to Baker. The fact that the conclusions are generally favourable does not undermine the objectivity of the critical judgment. Furthermore, they do handle what they consider to be the primary area of controversy, namely, the social dimension of the human person. On this subject they conclude, with varying emphasis, that Baker is orthodox although the way he puts things could be open to misunderstanding.

Two further points emerge: all commentators on Baker, from Jones in the 1630s to Luke Bell in 1989 are agreed that his teaching is relevant for their contemporaries. None attempts to defend him behind the shield of datedness. Secondly, all are agreed that he represents a focusing of various strands of patristic, monastic, medieval and 16th century teaching on spirituality. He is the heir of the past, the absorber of the present and the endower of the future.

These last two points, Baker's relevance and his representative character, are particularly important for my purposes in this thesis. People of the present time believe that his teaching is of value for men and women of today. In the next section of the present chapter I shall consider his status as a spiritual teacher for the modern world. *Holy Wisdom* is neither a period piece nor a highly abstruse subject on which to write a thesis.

A critique of *Holy Wisdom* as a solitary, albeit influential piece of writing would, I suggest, find justification. But Baker's teaching is also representative: it has grown out of a wide reading of Christian spiritual writers, particularly within Western Catholicism. I shall look at this in more detail in section m) of the present chapter. An attack on Baker will

inevitably have wider repercussions. My critique of him will, *ipso facto*, criticize all those who share his anthropological stance.

III RELEVANCE AND SOURCES

1) The relevance of Holy Wisdom

My rapid survey of the fate of the book over the three hundred and thirty years of its history indicates that, despite fluctuating fortunes, it has continued to be read. Again with variations, it has been valued throughout by English Benedictines. But it has also had admirers from other backgrounds.[103] John Worthington discusses it in a letter to the Cambridge Platonist, Henry More (1614-87). The Quaker Robert Barclay (1648-90) read it, as did Lady Abigail Fairfax (d 1710). In our own century, Evelyn Underhill valued the work.[104] For E. I. Watkin, writing in 1953, the principles of Bakerism "can and should be the foundation of the spiritual education of Catholic children ... I know no wiser or safer school of prayer."[105] For David Knowles in 1961, *Holy Wisdom* is "indeed a book of power ... which will guide all for a part of their way, and may suffice to some for a very great part of their lives."[106] For David Lunn, Baker is "a free spirit, a universal figure, who belongs to all ages and all creeds."[107] If these are scholars and academics, an influential and popular spiritual guide of today, John Main, would claim to find his method of prayer in *Holy Wisdom* and would successfully recommend the book to modern spiritual disciples.[108]

There are Bakerites around today and not only in the monasteries of the English Benedictine Congregation. It is no exaggeration to say that if there is a uniquely EBC approach to personal prayer, it is that of Baker.

Holy Wisdom

Holy Wisdom is probably one of the few systematic spiritual treatises from the 17th century that is still read with profit today. As McCann writes: "the fourteenth century in England ... produced original spiritual writings of the first quality. If we look for any parallel ... in post-reformation Catholicism, we find one book, and one book only, Father Baker's *Sancta Sophia*, which can be set beside (them)."[109] Thus, as I said in the introduction to the thesis, we are dealing with something that is, for many, a living document. It is, therefore, profitable to investigate the work and justifiable to submit it to a modern critique.

m) Baker's sources

Although the majority of authors who have written about Baker make reference to his sources, no one has, as yet, undertaken the long and complex task of showing exactly how such sources influence him. I do not have space in this thesis for such a task. I rest my claim that Baker is representative on two pieces of external evidence and one of internal. The first is that all previous scholars working on Baker are unanimously agreed that he is the heir to the medieval English mystics as well as blending together several other main-line strands such as the monastic and the various influences of the contemporary scene. My reading of *Holy Wisdom* does not suggest that such an agreement is ill-founded. There are many echoes of earlier writers; for instance, the emphasis on will takes up an important theme of the *Cloud of Unknowing*.

The second piece of external evidence is the list of translations and commentaries that Baker undertook.[110] These include, among the medieval English mystics, the *Remedy against Temptations* of Richard Rolle, the *Cloud of Unknowing* and the *Epistle of Privy Counsel*, Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*

and *Letter to a Devout Man;* among more ancient writers, sayings and lives of the Fathers and an exposition of the Rule of St Benedict; among medieval continental authors, sermons of Tauler and various translations from Thomas à Kempis; among contemporaries, writings of Louis of Blois (Blosius), the *Theologia Mystica* of Van Herp (Harphius), Constantine Barbanson's *Secret Paths of Divine Love*, Bonilla's *A Short Treatise of the Quiet of the Soul*, Benet Fitch's *The Rule of Perfection* and the statement of the Jesuit Balthazar Alvarez concerning his prayer. All these authors are quoted or referred to several times in the course of *Holy Wisdom*.

The final piece of evidence is my detailed index of persons quoted or mentioned in *Holy Wisdom*, the first such index to be drawn up. A glance at this will indicate the extent and frequency with which authorities are quoted.[111] Although Baker occasionally differs from or modifies his sources, his teaching usually concurs with theirs.

Thus I would argue again the central point about the repercussions of my thesis: that an attack on Baker does more than criticize *Holy Wisdom*. It questions the admissibility of some fundamental anthropological assumptions held by several Christian spiritual writers. But the extent to which the various levels of attack apply beyond Baker to his sources will vary. Thus, as we have seen, it might be argued that Baker's social teaching is not fully representative: if that is the case, then the argument of chapter 6 will not have such wide repercussions as that of chapter 5, where the anthropology criticized underlies a great many spiritual writers.

n) General conclusion

In this chapter I have described and discussed *Holy Wisdom*. I have claimed that it is a work that deserves a close critical study. I have

suggested, further, that it finds resonances in other Christian spiritual writers. This is not to claim that it is entirely unexceptionable. In his understanding of the human person as an individual, Baker is representative. His anthropology is shared by many spiritual writers up to modern times. It is this anthropology that I will submit to criticism in chapters 4 and 5. His understanding of the social dimension, although entirely orthodox and certainly not marginal, was more controversial for both his contemporaries and later writers. Thus the attack developed in chapter 6 will have slightly narrower repercussions than that of chapters 4 and 5.

Before I begin my detailed critique of *Holy Wisdom*, it is necessary to establish the principles on the basis of which I shall criticize it. These principles, as I have already indicated, are those of an incarnational theology. Thus we must now step back from *Holy Wisdom* and, in the next chapter, consider some of the requirements of an adequate incarnational theology.

On the Picture and VVritings
of the late venerable
E. AVGVSTIN BAKER.

In Sable lines laid o're a ſilver ground
The face of that myſterious Man is found,
VVhoſe ſecret life and publiſhd VVritings prove;
To Pray is not to talke, or thinke, but love.

No ſtreame of VVords, nor Sparkes of VVitt did fill
His tongue or fancy vvhen he Pray'd: His VVill
Through Beames diuine, conceivd a chaſt Deſire;
And Teares of Ioy enlivened the ſoft Eire.

Yet ſome have falſely thought his ſober flame
VVith thoſe VVild-fires that haunt our Iſle, the ſam
So Idolls to Church-pictures like may be,
And fondeſt love reſemble Charity.

Hayle Booke of life! Temple of VViſedome, hayle!
Againſt the Synagogues of Hell prevaile.
England may novv her SAINT-SOPHIA *boaſt;*
A fairer too, then that the Grecians loſt.

Fr. Leander Norminton
of the Holy Order of
S. Benedict.

Poem by Fr Leander Norminton, "On the Picture & Writings of the Late Venerable F. Augustin Baker," printed as frontispiece of the 1st edition of *Sancta Sophia*

CHAPTER 3

"A VIEW OF THE HUMANITY OF OUR LORD"[1]

TOWARDS AN INCARNATIONAL THEOLOGY

a) Introduction

The main concern of this thesis is to carry out a detailed critical investigation of the Christian anthropology of *Holy Wisdom*. By "anthropology" I mean the way in which the human person is understood and described. Augustine Baker has no systematic anthropology, although an understanding of the human person is taken for granted. My method will be to draw out his implications; in this I shall be particularly sensitive to the pattern of language and imagery employed in *Holy Wisdom*. I shall examine also his more specific anthropological statements.

This critical investigation will require criteria. If the anthropology of *Holy Wisdom* is to be criticized, it must be from the point of view of a clearly articulated position: this position must derive from the Church's theological tradition and be responsive to the understanding of Christians of today. My stance is that of incarnational theology and in the present chapter I shall attempt to outline an incarnational theology that will provide a rule against which *Holy Wisdom* is to be measured.

It is necessary to emphasize here that there is no single incarnational theology. Within the progress of Christian history there have been many different attempts to articulate the implications of the incarnation both for dogmatic theology and for ascetical. Again, the notion of a broad spiritual tradition of which Baker is representative is both inaccurate and over-simplified. Perhaps the Roman Catholic perspective

which, for so long, was characterized by an apparently clear and monolithic understanding of Christian tradition, has tended to encourage an over-simplified view of the development of spirituality.

When I say that Baker is representative, I mean that he is influenced by several important currents of spirituality and that he has many anthropological assumptions in common with theirs. He is firmly within the Catholic tradition in the sense that *Holy Wisdom* has never been suspected of unorthodoxy but, on the contrary, has been warmly recommended. Admittedly, there are other ways of looking at the spiritual life: even against the background of 14th century English spirituality with which Baker was familiar, differing anthropological attitudes can be detected - between, for instance, the *Cloud* and Richard Rolle, or Walter Hilton and Julian of Norwich. The point I am making is that I am aware of the complexity of both incarnational theological ideas and of the many strands of spiritual tradition. Nevertheless, in a work of this scope some simplifications have inevitably to be made.

In broad outline my incarnational perspective will be derived from that found in the second Vatican Council's constitution on the church in the modern world, *Gaudium et Spes*. The teachings of Vatican II are both authoritative and influential on the way Christians of today experience and articulate their faith. In the previous chapter I argued why it is justified to submit Baker to a "modern" critique; I shall recapitulate that argument at the end of this chapter.

In the present context, my purpose is not simply to expound the teachings of Vatican II: the theology of today grows out of what has gone before. I shall survey some Greek and Hebrew understandings of the human person, paying particular attention to the body/soul relationship. I shall

then glance at the New Testament before briefly considering two important figures: St Benedict, a central authority for Baker, and St Thomas Aquinas, representing the high scholastic period and influential on the development of Catholic theology; *Holy Wisdom* invokes the authority of Aquinas on several occasions. In part III I shall present a summary of the anthropology of *Gaudium et Spes*, consider the themes of creation, incarnation, church and sacraments, and look at two anthropological implications, namely integration and the value of the emotions. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the basic position from which Baker will be assessed.

As I said in the previous chapter, I am concerned primarily with assessing Baker's *Holy Wisdom* and through that, the Christian anthropology that he assumes. Thus my purpose is not to produce a defence of incarnational theology over against other forms of theology. Although showing that the former does derive from scripture and tradition, I shall, to some extent, be assuming its validity as a starting point. "How does *Holy Wisdom* (and the anthropology that it represents) fare before the tribunal of incarnational theology?" is the question with which I am primarily interested. I shall not be so concerned with another question, "To what extent is incarnational theology a valid starting point for such a critique?"[2]

This said, it should be clear that my outline of incarnational theology is intended to be provisional rather than comprehensive. Its purpose is to provide a tool with which to work on Baker.

I SETTING THE SCENE

b) Theology and spirituality

At the heart of theology there seems to be a series of dichotomies or polarities. These include transcendence and immanence, God and the created world, the divine and the human, spirit and matter, soul and body. This list is not exhaustive. A consideration of such distinctions is inevitable when dealing with important themes of theology - whether creation or incarnation, whether sacramentalism in the broadest sense with its implications for understanding the material world, or the specific liturgical sacraments of the Christian order. There have been attempts to integrate the apparently irreconcilable members of these pairs, presumably springing from the belief that wholeness or unity is somehow more true or desirable or fundamental than division. Although monism of one form or another has never lacked its supporters, these attempts have been more energetic in theological discussion of the present century. There is for instance Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel* (1946) where he reconsiders the relationship between the natural and the supernatural, and Grace Jantzen's *God's World, God's Body* (1984) in which she attempts to bring God and the world together in a way that avoids none the less the extreme of pantheism.

It might be asked what is the relevance of such distinctions and integrations to spirituality or to the Christian life in general. My contention is that they are highly relevant. The Christian life is concerned with the relationship of man or woman to God and to the world; spirituality is particularly concerned with the relationship of the human person to God as expressed in prayer, asceticism and liturgy. Because it is the same God that underlies all human activities, the theology of spirituality must be in harmony with theology in general. The dogmatic truth that God became man will have repercussions in the theory and practice of spirituality. This may

seem obvious but Christians have not always integrated their theory and their practice.[3] It is possible, for example, to believe in a theological doctrine of incarnation and yet to live by a spirituality the theory of which is in conflict with the implications of incarnation. This, presumably, is what certain Docetic, Marcionite and Gnostic sects did.[4] Their spirituality, if investigated, would reveal roots in a syncretistic Platonism or an Oriental dualism with a pessimistic view of matter. These examples, of course, are "heretics"; but it could be argued that a similar failure of integration occurs in some influential spiritual writers who are not heretical. In Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, for instance, book 4 deals over eighteen chapters with the Blessed Sacrament; yet there are several references in earlier parts of the work which suggest a negative attitude to the body.[5] My point is tentative and I do not wish to labour it. I am aware of the danger of over-simplification: incarnation itself, as I have emphasized, is open to various interpretations. But in the teaching of Church councils a positive understanding appears to emerge, made precise in controversy, sharpened by the challenge of heresy and encapsulated in the creeds.[6]

Augustine Baker is a writer on spirituality and what I shall be investigating in this thesis is the extent to which his teachings are in harmony with some basic themes of Christian theology. I shall be interested in how far he draws inspiration, albeit unconscious or mediated, from philosophical positions that are in conflict with such theology. In particular I shall consider his Christian anthropology, the way in which he understands the human person, particularly in the context of the fundamental anthropological distinction of body and soul.

One's view of this distinction and the respective values one places

on body and soul can influence the way one sees the world. Consider two caricatures representing two extreme positions: the first is to see human beings as exiles or aliens in a vale of tears. Their purpose is to prepare themselves for the bliss of heaven which will be achieved after death. This point of view emphasizes the body/soul and related distinctions. It tends to feel that Christianity is primarily concerned with the "spiritual life". Its attitude towards the material world and the body is negative or at best neutral. The soul is seen as the essential person.[7] Such would be the position of Gnostics and Manichaeans. Although these labels refer to groups in the early centuries of the Church, the mood they encompass is perennial: it springs from a fundamental pessimism about the world and its potentiality.

The other caricature rejects the notion of an other-worldly heaven and sees human fulfilment, if obtainable at all, as a function of this present life. One is reminded of the Corinthians whose experience of the Spirit was such that they were either sceptical or indifferent as to the possibility of life after death. At its extreme limits this position would merge into pantheism or even materialism. It would more easily place a high value on matter and the body than the first point of view.

As I have said, the two positions outlined are caricatures; in practice few people if any would adopt either extreme. But caricatures, like cartoons, are valuable because they clearly indicate particular aspects or tendencies in their subjects, and they do this by over-emphasis. The beliefs of human beings, however, cannot be neatly categorized; the balanced Christian is the one who can steer between the extremes, who can live by an eschatology which is at once realized and futuristic, and therefore biblical.

It can be seen that one's anthropology lies at the heart of one's

attitude to spirituality and to life as a whole; it does affect the way in which one lives, prays, hopes and acts. Thus a critical appraisal of Baker and the spirituality he represents must address itself to the level of his Christian anthropology.

II HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

c) Greek understandings of the human person

I will now offer a brief consideration of the two main sets of views which gave rise to the Christian understanding of the human person; these were the Greek philosophical and the Hebraic scriptural. They underlie the work of Augustine Baker as they do that of most Christian spiritual writers. We must understand them before we can criticize him.

In his discussion of the body/soul distinction Karl Barth identifies three main positions: there is the abstractly dualistic conception which is also "unfortunately ... the traditional Christian view;"[68] there is a materialistic monism which holds that the body is the real thing and the soul pure appearance (though how a soul could be *appearance* is not easy to see); finally, there is a spiritualistic monism which sees the body as a shadow of the spiritual reality of the soul. Needless to say these three positions are not exhaustive: they help us to take our bearings. All three have been held from ancient times although, due to the prestige of Plato in western thought, dualism has tended to predominate, albeit in forms considerably different from that in which Plato himself expounded it.

The acceptance of life after death, perhaps as ancient as the human race itself, was the spur that forwarded consideration of how human beings were made up and therefore how they might survive. A distinction between

the body, a physical object that at death would cease to function and would decay, and an invisible "spiritual" reality was an obvious way of explaining survival. The shadowy teachings of the Orphic and Pythagorean sects with their suggestions encapsulated in the formula *σωμα σημα* that the soul's sojourn in the body is a punishment for sin, or that the soul has no organic relationship to the body and longs to escape, led naturally into the dualism of the Platonic dialogues.[9] Not that all Plato's predecessors shared the Orphic/Pythagorean views: the Homeric writings for example suggest that the soul is like a puff of smoke which, on separation from the body at death, is blown to nothing by the wind.[10] This is one of the views that Plato glances at in *Phaedo*[11] and is vaguely similar to the Hebrew understanding of the insubstantial fate of the *nephesh*.

But Plato is the master of western philosophy and it is to his dualism that we turn. The *Phaedo* presents a series of arguments for the immortality of the soul which it sees as deathless, imperishable[12] and akin to the divine.[13] The body is spoken of in unmitigatedly negative terms: it is despised by the soul;[14] the soul's union with it is "an evil admixture";[15] it is a hindrance to the soul's quest;[16] it fetters the soul;[17] the soul is chained up in it.[18] Now it is true that Plato's understanding of the soul as incomposite[19] changes in the *Republic*, *Phaedrus* and *Timaeus*, where he develops a tripartite view. Nevertheless his attitude to the body remains at best neutral. The body/soul distinction is a natural consequence of his epistemological and metaphysical dualism. If the Forms constitute reality, are the true objects of knowledge, are only dimly perceived in the shifting world of the senses and in fact *inform* the material world, it is natural that souls, akin to the Forms and therefore able to apprehend them, should be superior to bodies. Even if the body is beautiful,[20] albeit with a

derivative beauty, in symmetry with the soul[21] and even in sympathy with it,[22] the soul is older,[23] superior to,[24] and has more truth and reality than the body.[25] Plato's philosophical views may have changed over the course of his life: that does not concern us here. But one of his important legacies was a definite and evaluative body/soul distinction.

In succeeding centuries differing views appeared: the old Stoa, for example, held a material soul united to a material body. Its later distinction between the ruling principle or *ἡγεμονικον* and the body witnessed an increasing Platonist influence.[26] The Epicureans too thought of the soul as a material substance.[27] More influential on Christian thought, however, were the neo-Platonist ideas of such thinkers as Plotinus. Although he "seemed ashamed of being in the body,"[28] his was an attitude of "austere, detached tolerance for what after all is an image or reflection of our true self and good on its own lowest level."[29]

A. H. Armstrong suggests that the kinship between the Platonist systems and Christianity arose through their common interest in life after death, an interest not shared in the same way by the Stoics and Epicureans.[30] But concern with a better life in some spiritual state will inevitably influence one's view of the present. The position of such masters as Plato and Plotinus has its attractions. Let us consider it for a moment in the most favourable light, because it has supported so much Christian spirituality. The mood which characterizes it is not uncommon among those drawn to prayer and contemplation. There is the sense of limitation in this present life, the feeling, perhaps increasing with age, that possibilities are less than one at first imagined. There are experiences of beauty and wonder, always transient, which set off the longing for a greater beauty. The shifting world of the senses provided so many tantalizing hints: it was

a natural enough move to describe the longing as *eros* and the hints as signs of an ideal world where beauty and goodness or simply the One abide, ready deities for unveiled contemplation or union.

The problem is that dissatisfaction with the limited, shifting world of the senses can easily give rise to an evaluation of that world which treats it with contempt or at least with cool neutrality. Gnostics, Docetists, Manichaeans and other heretical sects were, in varying ways, party to this contempt.[31] They forced the Church to clarify and define what was often tacit and vague. But, as I mentioned in the previous section, some orthodox spiritual writers, in propounding a theory and practice of asceticism and prayer, may not always have been able to escape a mood which the official teaching condemned.

d) Hebrew understandings of the human person

When we turn to the Old Testament witness we find a somewhat different picture. The Old Testament itself is, of course, a library of books written over a period of several hundred years. Already by the time of Christ Hellenism had exerted its influence and some books, ***Wisdom*** for instance, were considerably Hellenized in inspiration and tone. But the pre-Hellenistic scriptures present a remarkably clear and consistent view of the human person.

This view saw the human being not as a duality of body and soul but as a unity that could be spoken of under different aspects. Probably it was strongly influenced by the lack of any clear understanding of an individual after-life. Human happiness was in this world. The Torah was God's gift to lead men and women to fullness of life here and now. The hope of immortality was that one's name would be carried on by one's sons and that

the community or nation would endure and prosper.

Work done in recent years on the anthropology of the Old Testament is conveniently summed up by H. W. Wolff.[32] The Hebrew word *nephesh* is often translated *ψυχη* in the Septuagint and *soul* in English, but the Greek and the English do not really convey the correct sense. *Nephesh* was originally a bodily word, perhaps meaning *throat* and therefore related to the vital human activities of breathing and eating. It stands for the living being as needy and dependent, drawing his or her life from the Creator. Wolff lists seven loosely connected ways in which *nephesh* is used.[33] Two examples are as a pronoun for the individual and as simply standing for *person.*

A second word, *basar*, can be translated *flesh.* It sometimes means the visible body, sometimes the human person as weak or frail or as in relation to others. More than a third of its occurrences relate to animals, showing that it pertains to something that human beings and animals have in common.[34] Although the relationship between *nephesh* and *basar* may seem to be parallel to that between *soul* and *body*, we must avoid taking the parallel too far and in particular evaluating *nephesh* vis-à-vis *basar.* Although the latter may be more directly connected with the physical body, the former too includes a definite sense of the bodily person.

A third word, *leb* is translated *heart:* it is the seat of reason, of feeling and of desire; it can mean *mind* or *understanding.* The word *ruah* means *breath* or *life;* it could be translated *spirit.* It is not something humans have by right but is a given. It is essentially a quality or power of God which he bestows on his creatures.

From this summary certain points emerge: all the words which describe the human being are originally bodily words; there are no words for body

and soul in the Greek sense. The human person is a unity seen through his or her different ways of being and acting. Any survival of the *nephesh* after death is at best shadowy and uncertain. It was only in the post-exilic period that a Hellenistic sense of the body/soul distinction began to appear; nevertheless authentic Judaism continued with a body/soul union. At the risk of over-simplification we might say that for the Greek, immortality consisted in liberation of the soul from the body; for the Jew in the resurrection of the body and the reunion of the human person. "What to Philo would have seemed the greatest imaginable evil was to the pharisees the highest conceivable good."[35] Where the Jewish apocalyptists of the inter-testamental period may have used *nephesh* many times for a disembodied soul in a way unknown in the Old Testament, they still could not "ultimately express the surviving personality in terms of soul only, but must add thereto the conception of a bodily resurrection."[36]

From a process that had already begun before the New Testament period, namely the entwining of these two anthropological strands, the Greek and the Hebrew, the Christian tradition was to emerge. In the next section, I shall glance at the New Testament witness to complete this consideration of the main roots of the Christian tradition.

e) The human person in the New Testament

Although the New Testament was written in Greek, its use of anthropological terms such as *σωμα* and *ψυχη* does not reflect Greek philosophical distinctions. Such terms seem to translate Hebraic concepts. This, of course, is an over-simplification of a complex pattern of mutual influence. The New Testament itself does not possess a consistent or

systematic anthropology: only in the Pauline writings do we find anything approaching one.[37] Indeed, because "the word (*σωμα*) has true content only in Paul,"[38] I shall restrict this anthropological discussion to Paul and shall deal primarily with *σωμα*.

I propose here only to offer a brief summary of the Pauline position. With regard to *σωμα* it seems to be the case that "one does not find the Hellenistic view in which the soul alone constitutes the true human ego, whereas the body is indifferent or an obstacle."[39] Indeed, as Conzelmann says, quoting Bultmann, "Rule of thumb: it is not, 'I have a *σωμα*,' but, 'I am *σωμα*, or, am in the body."[40] Usages that apparently contradict this understanding, such as *σωμα της 'αμαρτιας* (Rom 6:6) and *σωμα του θανατου* (Rom 7:24) are dealt with in relation to *σαρξ* or flesh: "*σωμα* is man as the one who can fall, and in fact has fallen, victim to sin and death. *σαρξ* is man as the one who has fallen."[41] *Σαρξ* has a neutral sense, but sometimes becomes a symbol for the lower nature or sin, although the latter does not necessarily have any physical meaning.[42] With regard to *ψυχη*, "it is important to note that the Greek doctrine of the soul does not appear at any point."[43]

This is not the place to present an exhaustive discussion of Paul's anthropological terms: instead, I would make two observations in conclusion. Firstly, none of his terms is used with exactly the same meaning in every context; the same word may carry a range of different shades of meaning. But secondly, as Whiteley puts it:

> Each individual man is a unity. He is not, of course, a 'simple substance' and in rare cases the Apostle's anthropology tends to be 'loose-knit' but in most places it is close-knit, and therefore, typically biblical. Most emphatically, his thought is not dualistic but unitary.[44]

f) The Witness of St Benedict

My brief survey of the anthropology of the scriptures reveals that they favour a predominantly unitary view of the human person. There is little or no sense of the Greek philosophical evaluation which exalts the soul and the spiritual at the expense of the body and the material. Moving on in Christian history to the 6th century, I will now consider whether the Rule of St Benedict may be viewed as incarnational and will glance at the anthropology which underlies what is one of the most frequently quoted authorities for *Holy Wisdom*.

The Rule is a practical book: Benedict calls it "a little rule for beginners".[45] It is concerned largely with specific instructions about how to live in community. It can be divided into two main parts: the first, the prologue and chapters 1-7, deals with spiritual doctrine; the rest, chapters 8-73, presents specific regulations.[46] In this present section, there is no room to carry out a detailed analysis of it so I shall restrict myself to two areas: firstly, Benedict's use of the language of body and soul; secondly, his attitude to what Baker calls "mental prayer".

Benedict uses the word "body" (*corpus*) only thirteen times.[47] On one occasion it means the community of the monastery (...*sociari corpori monasterii*.[48] In several others it is part of a scriptural reference: "discipline your body"; "remember Ananias and Sapphira who incurred bodily death"; "monks may not have free disposal even of their own bodies and wills" and "he will not have even his own body at his disposal."[49] The body plays a positive part in the process of the ascetical life: with "a complete prostration of the body, Christ is to be adored"; a monk should show "humility in his bearing" (*ipso corpore*).[50] He is lenient towards bodily weaknesses: support "with great patience one another's weaknesses of

body."[51] On one occasion, using the image of the ladder, he suggests a symmetry between soul and body: "Now the ladder erected is our life on earth; ... we may call our body and soul the sides of this ladder, into which our divine vocation has fitted the various steps of humility."[52]

"Soul" (*anima*) occurs twenty times.[53] Most of these are used in the expression "care of souls" or similar phrases.[54] Others occur in scriptural references: "...you will free his soul from death"; "*sicut ablactatum super matrem suam, ita retribues in animam meam.*"[55] Once or twice the word is a circumlocution for "person": "he has undertaken the care of the sick" - *infirmarum curam ... animarum.*[56] In general the word is used in a neutral way and without the anthropological weight that Baker will place on it.[57]

This detailed discussion of Benedict's use of these key anthropological words suggests that he has no evaluative dualism which prefers the soul. Indeed his attitude to both soul and body is favourable: he does not labour a distinction between them and each plays a positive part in the process of monastic living.

This impression is supported by a glance at the understanding of prayer in the Rule. The reader who searches for a developed theology of personal prayer seeks in vain.[58] Although Benedict speaks much of awe and fear of the Lord, of tears of compunction, of praise,[59] there are very few places where he discusses private prayer. In the chapter on the observance of Lent he recommends that "we will add to the usual measure of our service something by way of private prayer" (ch 49:5, p 253); in the chapter on the oratory, he speaks of "a brother who may wish to pray alone" and says "if at other times someone chooses to pray privately, he may simply go in and pray, not in a loud voice, but with tears and heartfelt devotion."[60] This is not to deny that a spirit of prayer pervades the ule: apart from

the Divine Office, several hours a day were to be spent in *lectio divina*, the prayerful pondering of the scriptures. But if the monk is to turn his mind to God often, this is with a view to an overall conversion of life. There is little sense of "mental prayer" as Baker would have it.

In other words, Benedict seems to be talking of an integrated way of living where there is no clear distinction between the bodily and the spiritual. He does use language that will recur in *Holy Wisdom* - the imagery of conflict in the Prologue, for instance, - but Baker will use it in a different way.[61] What is prominent in the Rule is the warm give and take of community life, an emphasis on mutual charity, on love for the abbot, on obedience to one other; the person of Christ features significantly, culminating in his embodiment in guests, the sick and, centrally, in the abbot.[62] Baker's contrasting attitude to several of these themes will be taken up in the following chapters. Enough has been said here to indicate that the overall tone of the Rule is incarnational. There is not space in this thesis to trace the way in which Baker uses Benedict, although that would provide the subject of a valuable study. In brief he seems to read the Rule in an idiosyncratic way, suggesting that its prime purpose is "to bringe a Soule ... to a Perfect Union w^th God;"[63] its practices are summarized as "Mortification"[64] and it is largely interested in "Mentall Praier". It will become clear in the following chapters that the core of Baker's anthropological assumptions, individual and social, is not drawn from Benedict.

g) The Witness of Thomas Aquinas

In the following chapters I refer on a number of occasions to Aquinas, a figure of great importance for the Catholic tradition. Several of

the assumptions that Baker makes are compared or contrasted with the anthropology of Aquinas. At this stage I wish merely to state some of the fundamental principles of Aquinas' view of the human person.

That the human being is composed of soul and body is taken for granted, but what is of interest is the relationship between them. The human person is "a compound whose substance is both spiritual and corporeal."[65] Aquinas considers "whether the soul is the man": on the grounds that the activity of sensing belongs not to the soul but to the whole person, "it is plain that man is no mere soul, but a compound of soul and body." He explicitly rejects the Platonic view "of man as a soul using a body."[66] As Aquinas' editor comments, "'A soul using a body': the slogan, as it were, for an 'angelism' Thomas was seeking to replace with something more in accord with the doctrine of the Incarnation."[67] Both body and soul are essential to the human person: "it is not the soul, properly speaking, that belongs to the species, but rather the composite of soul and body."[68] For Aquinas, it is the testimony of human consciousness which leads him to his central notion: "the intellective soul is ... the form of the body."[69] "It belongs to the very essence of the soul to be united to a body, just as it belongs to a light body to float upwards."[70] Aquinas' editor claims that his treatise on the human person attempted to put away the rhetoric of anti-bodily dualism.[71]

Aquinas' discussion is subtle and nuanced and thus open to possible misunderstanding. His linguistic usage proves that he cannot avoid words ("body" and "soul") which might be taken as implying a dualism, yet he is not talking so much about "two things but two sides of one single thing, a man."[72] Thus he has an anthropology which is in harmony with the implications of the incarnation: a human being is a human being and that is

the best that he or she can be; an angel is an entirely different thing and there is no way that a human being can or should attempt to emulate an angel. Unfortunately, as we shall see, Baker did not follow the full implications of such incarnational theology.

The purpose of this and of the previous section has not been to present a systematic exposition of the anthropology of Benedict and of Aquinas: I have merely considered some crucial themes that will come up again in the detailed analysis of *Holy Wisdom*. The point here is that Baker does not fare well against two of his own important influences.

III INCARNATIONAL THEOLOGY

h) Introduction

In the previous sections I looked at the anthropology of classical philosophy, the bible and two important precursors of Baker. I wish to claim that a sound Christian understanding of the human person must place equal value on the bodily and the spiritual aspects of the single person. Although it may be necessary to use language suggesting a dualism, the primary datum is the integrity of the human person. This represents a key notion of *Gaudium et Spes*.

In this part of the present chapter I shall start with a summary of some of the central anthropological ideas of *Gaudium et Spes*. My purpose in the thesis is not to expound that document in detail, although its spirit pervades what I have to say. Then I shall look briefly at three specific theological areas: creation, incarnation and church and sacraments. I have been selective and my treatment of each is by no means exhaustive. After this I will draw out two illustrative anthropological conclusions, namely,

the importance of integration and the value of the emotions. The chapter will end with a summary of the position from which I intend to approach *Holy Wisdom.*

i) The Witness of Gaudium et Spes[73]

Gaudium et Spes, the longest document produced by the second Vatican Council, looked beyond issues relevant merely to Christians; it was addressed to "the whole of humanity as well."[74] While acknowledging the reality of sin, it had been initiated, nevertheless, with a highly positive sense of the value of human nature: the apostolic constitution of Pope John XXIII, *Humanae Salutis,* issued on December 25th 1961, stated that the Church's aim was to lead human beings "to discover in themselves their own nature, their own dignity, their own end."[75]

The central position of an integrated anthropology is clearly stated in the opening sections of *Gaudium et Spes:* "It is man ... who is the key to this discussion, man considered whole and entire, with body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will."[76] Charles Moeller describes this Christian anthropology as "the nucleus" of the Constitution.[77]

Joseph Ratzinger, commenting on article 12, noted the general approval accorded to the choosing of "a dynamic account of man ... essentially based on biblical data."[78] I have already stated the danger of over-simplifying the influences that were brought to bear on the various Christian understandings of the human person: nevertheless, here we may see a broad favouring of an integrated biblical account, such as I described in sections d) and e) of the present chapter. The history of chapter 1 of *Gaudium et Spes* makes clear the explicit opting by the Council fathers for the integrated view. There was at first a suggestion that two articles be

written, the first on the dignity of the human body and the second on the dignity of the human soul and particularly of the human intellect. But, in the words of Ratzinger:

> This division was suppressed and the whole constitution of man was included in article 14 in order to oppose as much as possible any kind of dualism and to emphasize human unity even in this external way.[79]

Article 14 opens with the words "*corpore et anima unus.*"

This discussion sets the fundamental orientation of the pastoral constitution. The incarnational emphasis is repeated elsewhere, in the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on the liturgy, for instance. *Gaudium et Spes* talks also of the dignity of the intellect and of conscience; it does not, of course, cease to use language that may, in places, *suggest* dualism. Indeed, as I mentioned in the section on Aquinas, such language is unavoidable. But the central point is that the Council is concerned with "a theology of the unity of man as spirit in body and body in spirit."[80] Thus the whole person is valued and "nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their (the followers of Christ) hearts."[81]

If the first chapter of *Gaudium et Spes* is concerned with an integrated understanding of the human person as an individual, the second deals with the human community. Here emphasis is placed on the fact that "man by his very nature stands completely in need of life in society."[82] Related to this is the soteriological perspective, that human beings will be saved in Christ as a community.[83] McDonagh sums up the document's understanding of the relationship between personal and social:

> The first two chapters ... seek to integrate the irreducible personal quality of each human being as created in the image of God with the equally constitutive social dimension of the human in relationship and structure.[84]

Just as, for the Council, the human person is grounded in God's image and

Christ's body, so too is community.[85] This aspect of Vatican II's theology will inform what I have to say in chapter 6.

In the following sections I shall discuss b iefly three themes that underlie the kind of theology and consequent nthropology that I am advocating: these themes are creation, incarr ation and church and sacraments.

j) Creation

It has been suggested that the opening of the fourth Gospel deliberately alludes to the opening of Genesis;[86] here is a creation story, and for John the instrument of creation is the *Λογος*, the Word through whom all things were made.[87] There is obviously a relationship between the Word and the Old Testament figure of Wisdom:[88] "When he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master-craftsman," says personified Wisdom.[89] "She pervades and penetrates all things."[90] The Word, like Wisdom, is the blue-print of God's creative power. *Λογος* can carry several senses apart from *word:* it can mean *reasoning*, *rationale*, or even *blue-print*. Thus we might say that creation as a whole is *verbiform;* it partakes of the goodness and holiness of the Word. The goodness of creation is clearly proclaimed from the beginning of Genesis: "and God saw that it was good" runs like a refrain through the days of creation. For Paul, the whole of creation and not merely humankind will be brought to glory: "the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God."[91] Lest there be any doubt as to the goodness of material creation and so that the total sovereignty of God be maintained, the fathers insisted, contrary to the Platonic tradition, that God had created *ex nihilo*. From the end of the 2nd

century this doctrine was generally accepted and it was affirmed as consonant with Catholic tradition at the fourth Lateran Council in 1215[92] and at the first Vatican Council in 1870.[93] This theme is affirmed too by the second Vatican Council. The opening section of the first article of chapter 1 of *Gaudium et Spes* concludes with the words: "So God, as we read again in the Bible, saw 'all things that he had made, and they were very good.'"[94]

Holy Wisdom opens with an affirmation of this truth: "It was only infinite goodness that moved Almighty God to create the world of nothing."[95] Vatican I's summing up of the Christian doctrine of creation emphasizes three basic theses: the world depends totally on the creative activity of God; God created entirely freely; the ultimate purpose of the world is to share fully in God's goodness.[96] So this doctrine proclaims the goodness of material creation and *a fortiori* of the bodily make-up of the human person.

k) Incarnation

In *De Resurrectione Carnis*, Tertullian writes: "For the Father had already spoken to the Son in these words, 'Let us make man unto our own image and likeness.' And God made man (the same thing of course as 'formed'): unto the image of God ('of Christ' it means) made he him."[97] This is a richly suggestive idea for an understanding of incarnation, and it is one that is taken up by Karl Rahner, a theologian profoundly involved in the thinking of Vatican II,[98] who writes:

> When as Christians we ask what bodily man is - if we want to give a final answer, not a provisional one - the only answer we can give is, 'And the Word became flesh.' The σαρξ is what comes into being when the λογος becomes something which it is not already in itself, in its divine nature.[99]

The idea is repeated elsewhere in his writings:

> The climax of salvation history is not the detachment from the world of man as spirit in order to come to God, but the descending and irreversible entrance of God into the world, the coming of the divine λογος in the flesh, the taking on of the material so that it itself becomes a permanent reality of God in which God in his λογος expresses himself to us for ever.'[100]

What Tertullian and Rahner seem to be suggesting is that the Word did not become a human being like us, but that we are human beings insofar as we are made in the image of him; he is the paradigm of humanity. To be made in the image and likeness of God means to be made as models of God's *instantiation* of himself in the material world. The question, "How can Christ be fully human when he knew no sin, since all humans sin?" becomes a non-question. Christ alone is "fully human"; insofar as we sin we are failing to be fully human. Thomas V. Morris cogently argues a similar point but from a different angle: he draws a distinction between "commonality and kind-essentiality"[101] and applies it against A. D. Smith's attempt to show the logical incoherence of the incarnation.[102] Sinfulness would be an example of human commonality, but not of kind-essentiality.

This understanding of the human person is developed in *Gaudium et Spes*, which makes specific reference to *De Resurrectione Carnis*. Adam, the first man is a type of the one who is to come; Christ himself is "the perfect man" and through him, "human nature has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare."[103]

The primacy of soteriology in any theological pursuit arises presumably from an application of the principle of sufficient reason to the fact of God's revelation of himself. The material creation and the human being, the former climaxing in the latter, the *verbiform* in the *Christiform*,

are destined for and capable of glory because of their *essential* relationship with the Word incarnate. As Karl Barth puts it in a suggestive phrase, "since the constitution of man is from God, it is a saving fact."[104] The bodily, incarnate nature of the human person is not only good: it is necessary for salvation. As Rahner has it: "The bodily nature of man is necessarily a factor in man's spiritual becoming;"[105] and, in the words of Tertullian, *caro salutis est cardo;*[106] Tertullian retains a body/soul distinction but argues that salvation comes through the sacraments which can be received only by the flesh, thus "it is the flesh that makes possible the soul's election by God."[107] Thus, the anthropological limitations of a spirituality that fails to integrate the body in its scheme are made clear.

1) Church and sacraments

Incarnation must not simply be seen as a remedy for the *felix culpa* of human sinfulness; it was God's eternal purpose and is both the ground and the climax of creation. It is the mode of God's self-revelation. Human nature in the abstract became human person in the concrete. "The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us." As in all human beings the body of Christ was the locus of his acting, communicating and suffering; it was the source of his personality. Indeed it is difficult to see how the concepts of personality and individuality can have any meaning apart from bodiliness.[108] Conciliar doctrine of the early Church was at great pains to reject any teachings that violated the full bodily integrity of Jesus.

It was in his bodiliness that Jesus "for us men and for our salvation ... was crucified ... suffered death and was buried.[109] The flesh was in a particular way *salutis cardo.*[110] But after the ascension the incarnation continues: Christ continues to act, communicate and suffer, to heal, forgive

and sanctify in his body the Church. This is the essence of the Pauline theology of the body of Christ. In the earlier letters, 1 Corinthians and Romans, the body is taken as a metaphor of the community of Christians. "You are the body of Christ and individually members of it."[111] Christians belong to the body of Christ; they are morally united in their common acknowledgement of Christ.

In the later epistles of the Pauline tradition, Colossians and Ephesians, there seems to be a shift in the understanding of the body of Christ. A consideration of Tillich's distinction between *sign* and *symbol* throws light on this shift. Tillich writes:

> ... while the sign bears no necessary relation to that to which it points, the symbol participates in the reality of that for which it stands ... The religious symbol ... can be a true symbol only if it participates in the power of the divine to which it points.[112]

In 1 Corinithians and Romans it is as though Christ is the body politic of which the Christian is a member; in the later epistles the body becomes far more clearly a symbol in the Tillichian sense. Now Christ is "the head of the body the church";[113] we are not talking of a mere metaphor; the church is now the Sacrament of Christ. The positive understanding of body is underlined in the marriage image of Christ's love for the Church, an understanding which contrasts strongly with the view taken in 1 Corinthians 7.[114]

The notion of sacrament springs from the understanding of creation as holy because of its being *verbiform*. Its holiness focuses in the human being, the *icon* of Christ; Jesus Christ himself is the fruition of the human race and the Sacrament of God as well as the eternal Form (to use Platonic language) in which individual men and women participate. As Christ is the Sacrament of God, so the church, his body, is the Sacrament of Christ. In

the Catholic tradition his body is believed to act, communicate and suffer in many ways, but centrally through the sacraments of baptism and eucharist. Baptism is the incorporation of an individual into the body of Christ through a physical acting out of the mystery of death, burial and resurrection; unfortunately, the Roman Catholic Church, for instance, has reduced the explicit bodiliness of this ritual by relying on a mere trickle of water over the forehead of the candidate. In the eucharist the bread *is* the body of Christ and the wine *is* the blood of Christ because the celebrating community is already the body of Christ; the eucharist expresses and strengthens that identity. The other sacraments of the Catholic dispensation, ordination or service, marriage, anointing or healing, penance or reconciliation and confirmation or strengthening, all spring from bodiliness and all pertain to the bodily life of human beings: they cannot be disembodied or removed from their context in material creation.

This positive view of church and sacraments runs throughout the teaching of the Vatican Council. The constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, for instance, includes in its opening words the following: "the Church, in Christ, is in the nature of sacrament - a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men."[115]

m) Implications: integration

In part II of the present chapter I considered the understanding of the human person from an historical perspective. I drew out the basic contrast between dualistic and integrated views and suggested that an integrated or "wholistic" model of the human person is more in accord with the scriptural witness. It is also, as I showed in section i), one that is favoured by the second Vatican Council. In sections j) - l) I looked at some

of the fundamental doctrines of Christian theology, and related them to the teaching of the Council. In the present section m) and in section n) I shall glance at two anthropological implications of the general stance of this chapter. These are offered by way of example and are not exhaustive. The first is integration.

It is clear that current understandings of the human person tend to emphasize integration or wholeness. This, as I have shown, is the view put forward in the teaching of the second Vatican Council. *Gaudium et Spes* presents the human person as a unity, an integrated being, moving from the disintegration and conflict occasioned by sin to a completeness.[116] Central too, is the social dimension: "by his innermost nature man is a social being."[117]

If the conciliar teaching gives an authoritative basis to the principle of integration, the wholistic insight pervades much recent Christian writing. My intention here is not to offer a list of proof-texts, but to provide examples of the principle. Wolfhart Pannenberg, for instance, holds that "'person' signifies the human being in its wholeness."[118] A Catholic discussion of sexual morality makes the assumption that it is dealing with the "whole person;"[119] "wholesome human sexuality is that which fosters a creative growth toward integration."[120] Behind this lies "the wholistic view of person expressed in the documents of Vatican II."[121]

The wholistic view is supported from the standpoint of relevant sciences: Joseph Engelberg, a physiologist, says that "each of us is continually preoccupied with forging the many fragments of experience into a wholeness ... an integrative aspect is essential to our personal life."[122] Thomas A. Kane, a psychotherapist, speaking of "psychotheology" says "this view of the human person is an acknowledgement of the integration of the

human and divine ... which serves as the inspiring vision ... shared by all Christians."[123] Summing up the prominence of the wholistic stance, Edmund Hill claims that "two types of self-experience have dominated the European Christian tradition;"[124] these are the unitary self-experience and the dissociated self-experience. "For some time now our culture has been shifting back to a dominance of the 'unitary self-experience'. This shift is catching up with Christians too."[125]

As I have said, my purpose in this thesis is not to attempt a systematic defence of a "wholistic" viewpoint. But such a viewpoint does seem to reflect the way Christians of today understand their lives; it is in harmony with the Rule of St Benedict and with the implications of a Thomistic anthropology. It follows from the principles established in the previous sections of the present chapter, and finds an authoritative place in the teachings of the Vatican Council. The wholistic principle will underlie much of my criticism of Baker.

n) Implications: the emotions

A second and narrower implication of this kind of incarnationalism has to do with the emotions. I take the "emotions" to cover what have often in the past been called "affections" or "passions". How these feature in Baker's spiritual teaching will be dealt with in chapter 4, section f). For the moment I wish merely to observe their importance for an integrated understanding of the human person. Strong feelings are an inescapable part of being human; thus they find a place within the context of incarnational theology. Robert Murray bids us "to remember St Thomas's wise reflexion that, because we are men and not angels, a human act accompanied by a natural reaction ("passio") is not more imperfect but more perfect for man,

because more truly human."[126] Such emotions may well need to be understood and controlled, but they cannot and indeed should not be expurgated from human life. From a scriptural viewpoint, Anthony Wieczorek argues that strong emotions and passions are part of prayer: the God of the scriptures is a passionate God and "our emotions are occasions of grace, provided we let our God work through them."[127] Negative feelings too can foster human growth; nevertheless, "though Christianity embraces an "embodied" way to God, we often minimize our own incarnation."[128] For Pannenberg, "passion can also be a response to a call of God ... in the concrete situations of the world of human life, a response to a call that elevates individuals above the everyday and renders them capable of extraordinary dedication."[129]

This view that all parts of embodied humanity are valuable and all enable people to develop as Christians is a corollary of the incarnational theology I have been advocating. That emotions need control is clear enough, but the tendency has been present in Christianity to view them as somehow unworthy: for Clement of Alexandria, in contrast to the Greek philosophers who taught their disciples to resist passion, "our ideal is not to experience desire at all."[130] Clement may not be particularly representative and such a view may be rather carelessly stated, but, as we shall see in the following chapters, it wields its influence in Baker's writings.

o) *Conclusion*

It has not been my purpose in this chapter to develop an exhaustive or systematic incarnational theology and I make no claim that my discussion is uncontentious. Nor have I drawn out all the anthropological implications of such a theology. Further implications will emerge in the following chapters. What I have attempted to do is to indicate the basic position

from which I will criticize Baker; that position derives from the theology of the second Vatican Council, but is anticipated in some respects in precursors upon whose authority Baker draws.

My broad conclusions may be summarized as follows:

a) The material world is good. In the words of *Gaudium et Spes*, "the world which ... is the whole human family seen in the context of everything which envelopes it ... in the Christian vision has been created and is sustained by the love of its maker."[131]

b) Because of the Word, human persons in their embodiment are like God.[132]

c) The body is the *cardo salutis*.

d) Embodiment lies at the heart of the theology of the church and sacraments.

e) The human person is to be seen in a wholistic way, where bodily and spiritual aspects are in harmony.

f) The person is, "by his innermost nature ... a social being."[133]

A fundamental assumption of incarnational theology is that embodiment is the locus of human personhood. Such an assumption entails several things. For example, the senses and sensuality have an essential part to play in being human and the human imagination and understanding are valuable faculties. Any move in the direction of angelism is to be resisted because it downgrades embodiment. All these and other issues will be dealt with in detail in the following chapters. As I have said, my purpose here is to lay a theoretical foundation to the detailed discussion of Baker's anthropology, not to develop a complete set of criteria. In general, each section in the ensuing chapters will trace an incarnational position on the issue under question and then draw out Baker's assumptions from the perspective of that position. The picture that will gradually emerge will be of the deficiency of Baker's Christian anthropology when assessed by incarnational criteria. And if Baker is deficient, then so too is the spirituality which he

represents.

What I am claiming is that a spirituality that undervalues embodiment is a spirituality that is questionable. Rahner makes the remark that "whenever the fathers become *philosophers*, i.e. Platonists, it is noticeable that they find it difficult to include the body in the victory of the spirit."[134] The Platonist tradition had produced great contemplatives and mystics; it offered clear and practical ascetical principles. The attractions of a ready-made spiritual system were evident; but did Christian spiritual writers really manage at the end of the day to baptize Plato? Some did, but others succeeded less well. The purpose of this thesis is to see how Baker will fare.

It might be argued that it is not permissible to criticize a writer of the 17th century from the perspective of the 20th. I considered this objection in the last chapter, but I would here repeat two points suggested there: firstly, exponents of Baker would not be satisfied to see him as a mere period-piece; they would claim that his spiritual teaching is relevant to the lives of men and women of today. If they are to defend that claim then they must allow him to come before the jury of the theological insights of today, because no one will want a spirituality that clashes with their basic understanding of God and the world. Baker must make sense in the context of this modern approach.

Secondly, I would view theology as an organic whole. No doubt there are shifts in emphasis reflecting changes in the social and historical conditions, but one thing grows from another. All theologians will wish to ground their thought in the scriptural witness; *all* theologians, to one extent or another, will be aware of and sensitive to what has gone before. I have attempted to ground my observations in the theology of the second

Vatican Council, and have looked at some influences on the way, influences whose authority Baker invoked. It is before this tribunal that Baker must appear. In the following chapters I shall occasionally, for convenience, use the phrase "incarnational theology" *tout court*. It will in all cases refer to the kind of incarnationalism that I have developed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

"WRESTLINGS AND AGONIES"

THE CONFLICT MODEL

a) Introduction

In applying to *Holy Wisdom* criteria generated by the incarnational theology developed in the previous chapter, we will need to be sensitive to the pattern of language and imagery that Baker uses. Even a cursory reading of the text will reveal the extent to which language suggesting conflict is used. Yet incarnational theology starts from the unity of the one person Jesus Christ; the salvation for which we long will be of the whole person in his or her diversity of bodily, emotional and spiritual factors. I have argued for the importance of integration and wholeness in such a theology. In the present chapter I shall be investigating a key idea of Baker's Christian anthropology and the ways in which it falls short of the requirements of incarnational theology.

Part I will set the scene with a brief consideration of models in general and of conflict imagery in Christian theology. Part II will deal with aspects of the human person which Baker holds to be, at least potentially, inimical to the development of the spiritual life. Part III will investigate elements in the conflict which may be seen as originating outside the human person. Part IV will take a more general look at the imagery of *Holy Wisdom* and will consider the claims of another model, that of journey. The conclusion will affirm the primacy of the conflict model for Baker and will urge its difficulties in the light of incarnational theology.

I PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

b) The concept of model & the model of conflict

Much of our language is metaphorical by which I mean that rather than speaking *directly* we speak by way of comparison so that the particular associations of one object or state of affairs are used to highlight another. Janet Martin Soskice offers as a working definition of metaphor "that figure of speech whereby we speak about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another"[2] and Sallie McFague suggests that "a metaphor is seeing one thing *as* something else, pretending "this" is "that" because we do not know how to think or talk about "this", so we use "that" as a way of saying something about it."[3] It would be impossible to communicate as evocatively and subtly without the use of metaphor. Related to metaphor is the concept of *model.*[4] Its use in natural science is well established.[5] A state of affairs that cannot be conceptualized directly is described using a model, certain features of which elucidate the state of affairs in question.

In theology, a discipline whose subject matter is both the human and the divine, the use of models is at least as relevant as in science. The bible, which, according to the Christian, is a uniquely inspired revelation of God and his workings, constantly talks in metaphorical language. The Christian tradition, striving as it does to express the experience of God in Christ, has constant recourse to models.[6]

Of course, not all models "disclose", to use the language of Ian Ramsey,[7] with equal effectiveness. Some are better than others. Avery Dulles, in the final chapter of his *Models of the Church* offers a list of criteria by which models can be assessed.[8] The criteria he suggests include

basis in scripture and in the Christian tradition, tendency to foster the virtues and values generally admired by Christians, correspondence with the religious experience of people of today, theological fruitfulness. Although some of what he says is imprecise it is clear enough what he is getting at: the model must accord with the tradition and tend on the whole to make people more committed to Christ and all that that entails.

I shall demonstrate that in *Holy Wisdom* there is extensive use of language suggesting a conflict model. Baker sees the Christian life as warfare being waged simultaneously on several fronts. The most serious and challenging of these is the battle *within* the human person: here the pairs of adversaries are described in a number of related though different ways, such as spirit and senses, inner person and outer person, and corrupt nature and the power of the Holy Spirit working through the superior faculties of the soul. Another is the conflict between the "*internal liver*", as Baker calls the person set on a life of prayer, and the malign activity of the devil operating directly or mediated through the opponents on other fronts. Yet a third level is the opposition between the individual person striving to live a profound personal life of prayer and mortification and the external human and social factors that inhibit this. These include unhelpful superiors and calls to take responsible positions in the context of the monastic community and its pastoral commitments. This third level of social relationships will be investigated in chapter 6.

I shall argue that the conflict model underlies much of what Baker says. But first, we will need briefly to consider the use of this model in scripture and tradition before examining the ways in which Baker uses it.

c) Conflict in the Old and New Testaments

Basis in scripture is an important criterion for a sound theological model. In the present section I shall consider how conflict is used in the scriptures.

The blood-thirsty nature of many of the texts of the Old Testament invariably raises questions for a modern Christian:[9] how does such violence fit in with a religion that bids its followers to love their enemies and to turn the other cheek? A notable passage is Joshua 6:21, "Then they utterly destroyed all in the city, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep and asses, with the edge of the sword." As an historical document, there may be no problem. The theory of the Holy War, however alien to 20th century Western liberals, has a clear rationale.[10] The custom of the ban in war, exercised in this passage, had various purposes: it was a sign of unqualified devotion to God; the wrath of God himself was in operation for his people and the killing was an act of worship.[11] Eichrodt suggests that the ban contradicted the moral tendencies discernible elsewhere within the Yahweh covenant and was purely for purposes of national order.[12] As time went on it was relaxed and less importance was attached to war-like virtues.[13] Of course, Palestine's geopolitical situation made that region particularly susceptible to conflict: the country is the sole land-bridge linking Eurasia with Africa:

> Any nation aspiring to establish an independent national state on the Palestinian land-bridge ... was destined to live under nearly constant concentric pressure from near and far, and only constant military preparedness could guarantee its survival.[14]

As a *religious* text for the spiritual edification of Christians, Joshua 6:21 is not so simple. Sometimes the difficulty is ducked by avoiding texts such as this which deal with violence and aggression;[15] in the

revised Roman Office, the three "cursing" psalms are omitted altogether, presumably because they are considered to be unhelpful to the religious aspirations of modern Christians. Some people are unhappy with this selectivity, arguing that all parts of the Old Testament are equally inspired and are relevant to salvation and that we must struggle to come to terms with them.[16]

For whatever reasons, the history of God's chosen people is one of conflict: the struggle to establish the nation in a particularly sensitive region, the effort to maintain national security and prosperity in the face of many threats from outside, the fight to safeguard religious purity in a broad context of alien idolatry. As the centuries passed, destruction and exile were followed by re-establishment and further persecution; the fanatical resistance of the Maccabees occurred less than two hundred years before the birth of Jesus; the ill-fated rebellion of Bar-cochba a hundred years after his death.[17]

The spiritual experience of a nation, no less than of an individual, arises out of its historical circumstances, so it is hardly surprising that the language of conflict is so prevalent in the Old Testament texts. This is not to deny that there is language of great tenderness[18] and lyrical love poetry[19] as well. The scriptures of the Old Testament were the foundation documents of Christianity so it was inevitable that their language and imagery would have a central influence on the way the Christian experience was articulated.

It would be untrue to say that early Christians failed to appreciate some of the difficulties associated with the language of conflict. The challenge of such men as Marcion (d. c. 160) who entirely rejected the Old Testament as unworthy of the gospel of love,[20] forced the main-line

Christians to face these difficulties. However, there was a method of exegesis at their disposal that would to all intents and purposes solve the problem for many centuries to come.

This method, allegorizing, was already in use in the interpretation of pagan literature[21] and in Jewish biblical exegesis.[22] Christian authors such as Clement of Alexandria began to use it, but it found a master in Origen (c. 185-253).[23] J. W. Trigg hardly exaggerates when he comments: "it was Origen who, more than anyone else, made allegory the dominant method of biblical interpretation down to the end of the Middle Ages."[24] This method would have a profound effect on the development of Christian spirituality;[25] we will see that Baker will use it.[26]

Even if allegory was "the dominant method" of exegesis, there were other levels of meaning: Origen spoke of the "bodily" (literal) and the "psychic" (perhaps moral).[27] Modern scripture commentary has tended to put the main emphasis on the historico-critical or literal meaning and to reject allegory as subjective and arbitrary. Nevertheless, those who use scripture homiletically, even today, will draw out moral and sometimes allegorical meanings. If the scripture is indeed inspired by the Holy Spirit and pertinent to salvation, then it would be appropriate for the preacher too to be inspired to draw out meanings relevant to the listeners.

This brief survey of the presence of conflict and the use of conflict language in the Old Testament and after suggests the following conclusion: whatever method of exegesis is used, this remains a language with which one will articulate one's Christian experience so it will have a formative influence on Christian theology and spirituality. In other words we might claim that there cannot be a genuinely *biblical* spirituality that does not use conflict imagery.

The Conflict Model

While the Old Testament is the background to the Christian experience, the New is the first articulation of that experience and the privileged basis of the various theological traditions. The New Testament is not much concerned with political or social conflict: in general a favourable or at least tolerant attitude is taken towards civil authority and social relations.[28] Nevertheless, there is the need to cope with persecution[29] and the commitment to Christ may well sever normal relationships.[30] The Christian experience is essentially one of personal transformation, albeit within the context of the community of believers. It is on this level that we find a considerable use of conflict imagery.

It is not possible here to develop an exhaustive survey so I shall restrict myself to a consideration of one or two passages from St Paul. As I showed in the previous chapter Paul has a unitary view of a human being although he does not see the human as a "simple substance".[31] "Flesh" or *σαρξ* is sometimes a neutral physical word as in 1 Cor 15:39; at other times it means "lower nature" or "sin", as in Gal 5:24. The fact that the same word is used, however, must not lead us to think that sin and physicality are related. Indeed, even in English, possibly under biblical influence, the word "flesh" can carry either sense.[32] Again, as I indicated before, the word "body" or *σωμα*, although sometimes the biological body, is more often the self: the human being does not *have* a *σωμα* but *is* a *σωμα*. When the word is used in a pejorative sense, as in "body of sin" (Rom 6:6), Paul means the human being under the sway of some power like sin or the flesh.[33]

For Paul there is a fundamental conflict *within* the human being between the inclination to sin, made particularly vivid through using the concrete word "flesh" and the power of the Spirit, working in the good will.

"I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing that I hate," he says; and he continues, "I can will what is right but I cannot do it".[34]

It is clear that Paul "did not draw up a scientific anthropology."[35] He did not always use his terms with great precision; nevertheless, what seems to emerge is that his was a fundamentally Hebraic anthropology.[36] He will use the fall to explain the conflict within the human person, but that conflict is a fact of his theology and a fact of human experience.

So the scriptures present us with a unitary view of human persons, but in the Old Testament their social dealings, and in St Paul their inner procedures are characterised by conflict. We will need to consider whether Baker takes conflict to the extent where he violates the essential unity.

d) Conflict and concupiscence

Before moving on to *Holy Wisdom* itself I wish to comment here on the role of concupiscence in the inner conflict. This will help to give a perspective to the conflict model as employed by Baker.

It is a fact of experience that all human beings have a fundamental selfishness that is manifested in several ways. The origin of this is a matter of contention; some would claim that it is entirely the result of environmental influence on what is at root a *tabula rasa*. Others would see it as arising in the human bio-physiological make-up, an expression of an urge for self-preservation or survival. The Judaeo-Christian myth of the fall and its consequences, be they the "evil imagination"[37] or original sin, is an attempt to ground this fact of human experience in a theological context.

For Luther, concupiscence was to be identified with original sin.[38]

The remission of sin in baptism was merely a non-imputation: "... *peccatum, quod Deus remittit per suam non-imputationem ex misericordia omnibus, qui ipsum agnoscunt et confitentur et odiunt et ab eo sanari petunt.*"[39] The Catholic tradition as defined by the Council of Trent would disagree: *"Hanc concupiscentiam ... sancta Synodus declarat, Ecclesiam catholicam numquam intellexisse, peccatum appellari, quod vere et proprie in renatis peccatum sit, sed quia ex peccato est et ad peccatum inclinat."*[40] Concupiscence springs from original sin and inclines to actual sin, but is not itself sin. Perhaps like the "id" of Freud[41] or the "libido" of Jung[42] or the *yeçer hara* of Genesis[43] it is a neutral force that needs strong direction and control.

In the strict sense, according to Thomas Aquinas, *"concupiscentia ... est in appetitu sensitivo."*[44] It is divided into actual and habitual concupiscence. The former is the disordered movement of the sensitive appetite; the latter is the appetite itself as source of such movements. The movements themselves are good; it is their disordered condition which is bad.

Sometimes concupiscence has been rather narrowly linked with sexual desires: perhaps disordered sexual desires are a particularly clear manifestation of concupiscence at work. But it is broader than this, and indeed broader than merely sensual appetite. The distinction between a sensitive and a spiritual appetite, as Karl Rahner points out following St Thomas, needs to be taken with great caution; they are powers of one and the same human being. Rahner writes:

> On the one hand the sensitive cognitive faculty will have to be seen as itself arising from the spiritual ground ... and thus as completely mastered by the spirit right from the start. On the other hand the spiritual cognitive faculty, because it must allow sensibility to arise from itself as the presupposition of its own realization, will itself have to be seen right from the start as a *sensitized* spirituality.[45]

The Conflict Model

Concupiscence on the sensual level is simply *"la manifestation ou le signe, sur le plan corporel, d'une attitude spirituelle qui porte la raison et la volonté à se révolter contre Dieu."*[46]

The doctrine of concupiscence in the Catholic tradition has no implications whatsoever as to a conflict between senses or spirit; its biblical roots are in a belief in the unity of the human person.[47] In the context of the Christian life there *is* a conflict between perverse urges that resist the growth towards union with God and "the *desiderium naturale* which includes the permanent affinity of the finite spirit with regard to the absolute God, and of the human will with regard to the absolute good."[48]

Concupiscence thus understood seems to accord with the fact of conflict within the human person and with the wholistic anthropology of the scriptures. Baker, however, as we shall see, will represent a rather different slant: for him parts of the human person will be in conflict with other parts. The locus of conflict will be shifted so that elements such as the affections and the senses will be seen as opponents. The outcome of this will be a failure to appreciate the incarnate unity of the human person. In the following sections I will investigate in detail the model of conflict as used in *Holy Wisdom*.

II CONFLICT WITHIN THE PERSON

e) A civil war?

The first area of conflict that we need to investigate is within the human person. We have already seen that people are prone to sin and may struggle within themselves to do what is right. But what *Holy Wisdom* seems

to suggest is that aspects of the human person are themselves inimical to spiritual development. I have commented on the importance of the emotions in human life;[49] in this part of the present chapter I will consider how Baker views their contribution to the inner conflict. I will also discuss his understanding of images and the imagination, senses and sensuality, and nature. From the perspective of incarnational theology, all of these are to be viewed positively. Baker's discussion, however, as I shall show, will suggest a rather different point of view.

f) *Affections and passions*

The words "affection" and "passion" occur frequently throughout *Holy Wisdom* and with particular frequency in the first and second treatises, "Of an internal life in general" and "On mortification". In the third treatise, "On prayer", "affection" takes on an additional technical meaning with reference to a particular kind of prayer. In this latter context it loses entirely any pejorative overtones. In the present section I will consider Baker's understanding of affections and passions and the extent to which he sees them as militating against the progress of the spiritual life.

It must be remembered from the start that Baker is not putting forward a philosophical analysis, although *Holy Wisdom* itself is fairly systematic in its presentation. To examine matters "scholastically", he says with regard to sacramental grace, "is not my intent" (76). Thus, despite his legal training, we must not expect the kind of linguistic precision we might look for in a philosophical document. It is not clear in how technical a sense he is using the words "affection" and "passion". Presumably they are English translations of Latin scholastic terms.

Affections start in tandem with the will, both being neutral

faculties. *"La partie affective de l'âme,"* says P. Pourrat, *"se meut vers ce qui est connu comme bon et se détourne de ce qui semble mauvais."*[150] The affections move towards what is perceived as good and away from what is perceived as bad. Baker agrees that this is their purpose. By "eternally loving, admiring, and enjoying" (3) God's perfections they contribute to the eternal beatitude of the human being. They are an innocent gift that must be given to God: Baker talks of "blind affections of the will pouring themselves upon God" (12, cf 192). All affections are to be concentrated on God (206). In prayer, "the affections and holy desires" are to be given "free scope" (49); indeed, "want of affection" is "the ground and cause of ... pernicious tepidity" (27). There is a sense of delight, almost of reckless abandon, in his consideration of affections when applied to God.

As a result of the fall, however, "the divine love by which their wills and affections adhered continually to God" was lost (4). Nevertheless, the fundamental purpose of the affections remains "to adhere and be united to God" (13). This brings us to the crucial point, and one which the incarnational theologian can share: the vitiation at the fall has turned the affections from their natural end: conflict will arise in the context of the struggle to redirect them. If Baker allows himself the occasional frolic with the paradisal state of the affections, his sombre warnings of the post-lapsarian dangers constitute the prevailing mood of *Holy Wisdom*.

So far so good: the question arises as to whether Baker retains a neutral understanding of the affections. By and large he does: the object of any spiritual militarism on his part is "inordinate affections", an expression that occurs many times (e.g. 75, 105, 166, 180, 182, 207); by this he means affections that are not directed to their proper end. He uses other expressions to mean roughly the same thing, for example, "corrupt

affections" (22).

But Baker seems to have little or no sense of creation as a mediation of God's presence: affections directed to *anything* other than God are bad. At one point he goes as far as to say "all adhesion to creatures by affection, whether such affection be great or small, is accordingly sinful, more or less" (168). He admits that affection to creatures might be "in order to Him" but, "if being deprived of anything or persons whatsoever ... we find a trouble or sorrow in our minds for the loss or suffering of the thing itself, such trouble ... argues that our affection was sinful" (168).

Stern words: but is he really so negative about the objects of affections? Any form of sensual affection to the world is bad (157), settled affection to creatures is bad (131), sensual affection even to meat is bad (67). He considers the Platonic view that corporal beauty might be a preliminary motive to a higher love, but concludes that it is too dangerous: "Therefore the necessary care of ourselves requires that we should not so much as look steadily and fixedly on the temptation of beauty, much less favour the attraction of it" (227).

It seems probable that he is often using "affection" in a semi-technical sense. Nevertheless, our modern understanding is also included: he talks of natural affection as between husband and wife or between parent and child (221) or the "partial affection" of some superiors (146); on several occasions of the "melting tendernesses of affection" to which women are more prone than men (107). He holds, with Augustine, that the affection between husband and wife is necessary but entirely without merit unless explicitly grounded in divine charity. The partial affection of superiors is viewed pejoratively and the "tendernesses" of women are less noble than the less sense-based experiences of men.

The Conflict Model

If affections in their nature, as opposed to in their object, are allowed an inherent goodness, the passions are unequivocally bad. We need to consider what exactly Baker means by the passions. When Thomas Aquinas uses the words *passiones animae* or simply *passiones*, he has something definite in mind that the English word "passions" does not accurately render. Eric D'Arcy argues that though not perfect, the word "emotions" is a better translation than "passions", although the latter was used by philosophers of Baker's period such as Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704).[51] In the Thomistic sense "passions in themselves are value-neutral, convertible to good or to evil, according as they are capable of according with reason or not according with it;"[52] they are "motions of the sensitive appetite"[53] and they can even enhance the goodness of an action if reason chooses to call in their assistance.[54] This Thomistic understanding of passions suggests that they are simply strong emotions, in themselves neutral. However, *Holy Wisdom* never uses "passions" in anything other than a negative sense.

There is something of the philosophy of the Stoics in Baker's approach to them. For the Stoics, the passions *(παθη)* are a disease.[55] If this is accepted then the ideal of their complete elimination is something at which to aim. One does not compromise with a disease: the aim is *'απαθεια*, the state of being passionless, rather than the more moderate *μετριοπαθεια*, moderation in passion, advocated by the Peripatetics and the Platonists. If, with Zeno, we define *παθη* as "excessive and immoderate impulses"[56] then we might perhaps see some value in the ideal of *'απαθεια*, but when we discover that the passions included not only anger and lust but also pity,[57] then we might begin to wonder what exactly the Stoics are

attempting to suppress: all feelings or emotions? For Baker too, passions include "fear, anger, grief", but also "tenderness, compassion, and kindness" (85).

The difference between advocates of *'απαθεια* and of *μετριοπαθεια* is not irrelevant to my present purposes: for the Stoics a *παθος* was an irrational impulse and therefore to be eliminated. For the others, it was a strong emotion and therefore to be controlled. The Thomistic sense, as we might expect, seems to accord with the Peripatetic and Platonist understanding.

Now Baker seems to hover between the two senses so that he appears to take a Stoic attitude towards a Peripatetic understanding of "passion". Thus strong feelings in themselves become suspect. He certainly views *'απαθεια* as an ideal: "True peace of mind ... is the supreme state in an internal life"; (it is) "an immutability, indifference and insensibility as to ourselves and to all creatures and events"(205).

He often considers the passions as a pair with the affections (eg 164, 207, 237). The sort of language he uses for dealing with them suggests that he views them as large, fierce dogs that he has been cursed with and cannot get rid of: they are to be kept from the mind (70) and subdued (71); they are the enemies of divine inspirations (98); dominion is to be maintained over them (178) because they are constantly engaging in secret risings (166); they are to be repressed (182); a continual guard is to be kept over them to prevent their breaking forth (322, cf 205). It is all reminiscent of the struggle of a military dictatorship to keep down its internal critics.

Baker does at one point consider coming to terms with the passions: the passage concerned has a modern ring. Let it first be said that this is

not Baker's natural response to dealing with them: that is made quite clear from his opening remark: "I find that some good spiritual authors do counsel a quite contrary proceeding, as a remedy and means to subdue passions"(178). They advise that the passions be brought explicitly into the conscious mind and then combated directly "by considerations of the example of our Lord, and His precept of charity to enemies, of the dangerous effects of revenge, and the blessed rewards of patience, etc" (178). Total repression is reserved only for the most dangerous passion of sensual impurity. Baker's conclusion on this method of bringing things into the open is that it may work for perfect souls but that the imperfect should "get the mastery over (the passions) by flying from them, and, if they can, forgetting them" (178). He will continue to prefer suppression to expression.

His negative view of passions is reinforced by his imagery: even if they are prevented from breaking forth into outward expressions or actions, like some poisonous plant "the evil root remains still alive" (181, cf 20). Remembering that love is the root of all passions and affections (237), he considers "the mortally poisonous effects of self-love ... that secret self-love which lurks in the inmost centre of our souls" (237), like some sinister disease. We must "scour and purify the spirit itself from the rust of inordinate affections" (237), a chemical image of corrosion. Finally, like some noisome vapour that blocks out the light, "the mists of passion" are to be dispelled (54); this image will recur (eg 86, 176, 295) and perhaps harks back to the Stoic view of the passions as diseases. The passions are "violent" (81), "unquiet" (44, 70, 212). Even if they prompt good actions they are to be resisted: mortification arising from an impulse of passion is to be suspected (190).

The Conflict Model

Before concluding we need to glance at the use of affections in the context of prayer: Baker defines prayer as "an affectuous actuation of an intellective soul towards God ..." (299); it is a process of fixing the affections on God (305). The will and the affections are linked and carried higher into God (363, 375). Amorous affections are closely related to pious desires (399). Affective prayer occurs where words and where meditation on images are left behind and where "our hearts", here identified with our affections (312), reach out to God. In these contexts in the third treatise, the affections are entirely liberated from the passions and are as valuable to the person as the heart or the will (cf 332, 361, 451 etc).

We are now in a position to draw some conclusions from this consideration of Baker's understanding of affections and passions, and these conclusions will not be entirely in his favour vis-à-vis a Christian anthropology of the kind I am advocating. The sense of conflict runs throughout his discussion as a dominant theme. If he acknowledges the neutrality of the affections and sees them as allied to the will, most of his discussion, apart from the technical use in the context of prayer, is given to the problem of controlling their unruly nature. God is their rightful object, but Baker has hardly any sense of God as mediated in creation. In other words there is no real attempt to integrate the ordinary day to day exercise of affections with the affections as applied to God. The exercise of affections in human relationships becomes suspect. (The spiritualizing motive behind this will be looked at in more detail in chapters 5 and 6). Admittedly, Christians must never promote a "preliminary concern" to ultimacy,[58] but Baker's extreme caution and fear suggests a shying away from the full implications of the fact that human beings *are* bodily and living in a material world.

Baker's frequent use of "affection" and "passion", particularly together, suggests that he does not simply see them as different ways of having the same feelings. If ordinary affections can be antagonistic in the spiritual life, when we come to the passions *Holy Wisdom* is even more unsatisfactory. If, as I have suggested, Baker is using the word in a sense not entirely removed from that of Aquinas (his examples of passions suggest that he may be), he lacks, nevertheless, the latter's fairly positive assessment. Indeed, Baker has barely a single positive statement to make about them. A Christian anthropology that accords with the incarnational theology I have advocated will need to integrate them.

Baker's problem is that he takes the inner conflict too far: potential allies are made the objects of attack.

g) Images and the imagination

Having considered the ways in which the affections and passions are seen in the context of the conflict model, we must now move to another area of conflict within the human person. In the first and second treatises especially, images and the imagination are closely and frequently associated with passions and inordinate affections. In chapter 5, section p) I shall consider the imagination and its role as one of the inferior or sensible faculties of the soul (334); here it is necessary to discuss its participation in the conflict.

The imagination (occasionally "the fancy" (eg 363, 467)) is a power of the soul which gives rise to images; an image, in the Thomistic understanding, is "the habitual sense trace of an experience, but includes also artificial signs, such as words, in the imagination."[59] Although images will have a positive role in the early stages of prayer, they and the

imagination which produces them are dangerous potential enemies.

Frequently they are associated with affections and passions when affections and passions are used in a strongly pejorative sense: it is desirable to be "naked and empty of all strange affections, images and distractions" (10); along with "all affections to creatures", "all images" must be excluded (15). The process of exclusion or driving out is emphasized (eg 75, 95, 192). Images are closely linked with passions: they are "mists" that must be dispelled (54), they can be distracting (70, 95, 199), often "vain" (311) or "seducing" (353); they stir up the unruliness of sensuality and passion (178, 203). Like their associates they must be "transcended" (12, 71, 424, cf 112, 314).

Images are explicitly involved in egging on the unruliness of passions and affections and there are many other references where Baker urges their pernicious quality and the dangers they present. The imagination has a dangerous predominancy over the other faculties (364) which it stirs up adversely (388); it is an area of the human person over which the devil has a particular sway (12, 122, 248, 364, 467).

What we need to note here is the substantial role of images and the imagination in the conflict. As with affections and passions, a potential ally is treated with hostility. In the later chapter we will see how his attitude is linked with his views on the place of the body and bodily experience and with his spiritualizing tendency.

h) The senses and sensuality

The words **"senses"**, "sensual", "sensuality", "sensible" and **"sensitive"** occur frequently in the course of *Holy Wisdom*. The senses are first of all the five: sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Baker calls these the

external senses and acknowledges their epistemological function: "man ... receives all his knowledge first from his senses" (451). Although with the schools he accepts that "with the state of a soul joined to a mortal body" there has to be some use of the internal senses (see below) or sensible images (453) he envisages a better condition where we approach "to a contemplation of God without sensible forms" (451, 453). "Sensible" usually means perceivable by the senses and carries no particular pejorative overtone. Sometimes it simply means "aware" (as in "sensible of dangers", 30). The external senses themselves are neutral, but their objects can present problems: "It is not seeing or tasting etc that are to be mortified, but the inordinate affections to those objects which delight the eyes or taste etc" (207).

In contrast to the five external senses, there are the internal senses. Baker does not expound these in any detail. In particular there seems to be no indication of a doctrine of "spiritual senses".[60] He probably identifies the internal senses with the "sensitive faculties" which he lists as "imagination, memory and appetite" (334). Of these imagination is given the first place (467, 481). We have already looked at imagination as an element in the conflict and will deal with it again in chapter 5. Its main function is to present sensible images to the mind. Appetite is rarely mentioned in *Holy Wisdom*. At one point Baker distinguishes "the natural appetite" which is neutral, "the sensual appetite" which desires pleasure and therefore must be curbed, and "the rational appetite" which opts "not as sensuality would have it" (230f). We see here again an element of conflict. If Baker has very little to say about appetite, he has even less to say about memory which has neither the same prominence nor the same meaning as in St Augustine.[61]

The Conflict Model

Baker has quite a lot to say about sensible devotion: it is seen as positive but limited in its value. Often the life of prayer will start with a God-given "tender, sensible devotion" (20); God can communicate his inspiration in sensible devotion (96); such devotion is a gift of God which is neither to be treated with scorn nor over-prized (325). Baker refers to the view of Harphius[62] that there is "a languishing love" which, he supposes, represents the highest degree of sensible devotion, but he cannot take it quite as seriously as Harphius does. Nevertheless, we have here a rare instance of his trying to explain a "spiritual" experience using terms taken from human relationships: "it is exercised about the heart much after the same manner that a violent but chaste love is oft exercised between absent persons of different sexes" (439). I suppose Baker is referring to something similar to the mood of Orsino at the beginning of *Twelfth Night*, a mood characterized by a feeling of longing and restlessness.

Baker offers several reasons for his firm belief that sensible devotion can be nothing more than preliminary. Firstly, "sensible motions" are inconstant, irregular and disorderly (90); he talks of "an unstableness in the internal senses" (23). Secondly, sensible affections are linked with particular personality types: "the tender-hearted" (385) and women, for instance; they are a symptom of "natural complexion" and "corporal temper" (330); so they are not a general sign of holiness. Indeed, *Holy Wisdom* tells the cautionary tale of the tyrannous William Prince of Juliers who had exquisite divine visitations on the night of the Nativity such that "he would be content to purchase with the loss of half his dominions such another consolation"; unfortunately, after his death he ended up in the torments of hell (326). Thirdly, the senses, internal and external, can be easily manipulated by the devil who "may have some influence in such

devotion and subsequent resolutions" (96). I will deal with Baker's understanding of the role of the devil later,[63] but even if we take it merely as a symbol of self-deception ("the father of lies"), then we can see that there is in this area of devotion a certain scope for the self-induced. Fourthly, sensible devotions are delightful. Baker uses the image of honey: a soul is easily tempted "to glut herself with the honey of it" (81) or to entertain "a too gluttonous delectation in sensible sweetnesses" (326). As a result of this there is an inclination to remain in them rather than to move on to purer prayer. But the fifth reason is the fundamental one: the more abstracted from the body and the senses prayer is, the more spiritual it is; and the more spiritual it is, the more "angelical and divine" it is (12). And, as I shall show later,[64] Baker would really be happier if we were angels rather than humans.

He does at least give some place to the senses, internal and external, in his scheme of progress in prayer. He distinguishes two ways in which sensible devotion relates to the spirit: in imperfect souls devotion starts in sensitive nature, mounts up to the spirit and produces "melting affections" to God and especially to the humanity of Christ; in the perfect, however, it starts in the spirit and descends to "inferior sensitive nature" in which it produces similar effects (325). He talks, rather rhetorically, of the external senses being drawn into the internal and there annihilated, the internal drawn into the superior powers of the soul and there annihilated, and these powers themselves "drawn into that which is called their unity" (452). The basic scheme of progress is clear: sensible devotion, relying on mental images or warm feelings, is inferior and must be gradually superseded (350); there should be a gradual rise "to the top of sensitive nature, where it is joined or combined with the superior spiritual will"

(385). The less the prayer uses the senses, the more "pure, clear and secure" it is (443). At the end the highest contemplation "does so exceed all voluntary operation of the soul's faculties, that it usually causes an alienation and suspension of all the senses, as well external as internal" (479).

Ascetical writers have traditionally seen the spiritual life as involving a progress from lower to higher and, as I have indicated, Baker is no exception. This may be a valuable model in that any personal relationship of importance should grow, but there is not much lateral thinking here, where the different faculties of the human person, sense or spirit or will might complement each other in the developing relationship with God. Rather, there is a fairly severe hierarchy. It starts with a fundamentally unfavourable attitude to sense experience; once again Baker is overwhelmingly aware of the dangers of sensuality. Admittedly, in one or two places he accepts that it is impossible for affection arising from sensitive nature to be rooted out (perhaps with the tacit implication that it would be rather nice if it could be), "neither is there any fault at all in it" (168), but the text has a preponderance of the same old verbs of transcending (71), suppressing (203), restraining and bridling (231). The sensual appetite is like a greedy beast: with "too much greediness" it pursues "the contentments necessary and proper to it"; it runs on blindly before; we must "call it back" (170). All sense pleasures must be abandoned (184); sensuality is unruly (203); its inclinations must be crossed (175); even the sensual pleasure of eating is suspect (230). "The conflict between reason and sense" is made explicit: "the combat does not cease" (203). If the senses find a place in his ladder of prayer, albeit a humble and inferior one, in his vision of the general Christian life they are viewed

rather negatively.

It might be argued that a hierarchical model such as Baker's could accord with the incarnational principle of integration in that each lower stage is taken up into the next one in the approach to the point of unity. If he occasionally suggests this (eg 452), the prevailing tone and the pattern of language creates a rather different impression. Conflict rather than integration is the persistent mood. I will consider the "point of unity" in more detail in chapter 5, section n).

In his understanding of the senses and sensuality, we are back in a fundamental dualism, in this instance between senses and spirit.[65] There are definite Platonic resonances here, and I will consider Baker's explicit Platonism in a later chapter.[66] But Baker is perhaps not unusual in his insistence on the inferiority of the senses. One author has drawn a distinction between sensuality and sensuousness, the former referring to the selfish use of material things (things of the senses) including other persons, the latter referring to the delight and wonder in human bodiliness.[67] Sensuousness, on this interpretation, accords with incarnational theology. Baker, however, is constantly aware of the dangers of the senses, so a conflict is implied between the bodily and the spiritual. This issue will be taken up in greater detail in the next chapter.

i) Nature and the fall

In accordance with Catholic theology, *Holy Wisdom* ascribes the difficulties in human nature to the effects of the fall. According to this traditional theology, in the state of unfallen nature Adam was possessed of gifts natural, praeternatural and supernatural.[68] *Holy Wisdom* opens with a brief though eulogistic description of the unfallen condition: Adam lived in

a state of contemplation loving God purely, without distraction; creatures and the senses served merely to intensify this intimate union with God (4, cf 168, 170). But as a result of "a wilful contempt and transgression of that one most easy command" our first parents were stripped of the supernatural and weakened in the natural gifts. Now there is no force left in "corrupt nature" ... "to raise their love towards God" (4).

The Christian traditions of East and West developed rather different understandings of the consequences of the fall for human nature. In general the East had a more optimistic view while the West, largely influenced by Augustine and his reaction to Pelagianism, developed its particular understanding of original sin and the corruption of the human race which, in Augustinian terms, is a *massa damnata.*[69] Baker shares the rather pessimistic view and the expression "corrupt nature" runs like a leitmotif through *Holy Wisdom.*

His consideration of nature, however, is not unmitigatedly negative. He acknowledges that there remains in all souls a natural propension to seek God (8), that natural and supernatural forces may assist in the pursuance of the spiritual life (30) and that God rarely if ever works contrary to "natural complexions" (55). If there is no clear guidance from God then natural reason is to be followed (67, 93). Here, however, Baker firmly retains a strong gap between natural reason and the divine inspiration. Finally, he argues that nature ought to be allowed moderate refreshment for the sake of the soul (67, cf 81). Very occasionally he commiserates with nature for its frailty (167).

But apart from these few instances the ruling tone is one of conflict. Two particularly evocative images occur several times each: the first is of nature as a swamp. "If a soul do not continually strive to get

out of nature, she will plunge herself deeper and deeper into it" (24); if a person avoids the daily quest for perfection he will "more and more deeply plunge himself in corrupt nature (127, cf 367). The second image is that of nature the temptress: souls must not hearken to her "subtle insinuations" (93); corrupt nature is so subtle that she always insinuates her own interests (180); nature will subtly invent excuses to draw people from prayer (414). We should note here the identification of nature and evil with the feminine.[70] Peter Brown refers several times to the linking, in the early tradition, of the feminine with the body, nature, the formless, unruly, inferior and seductive, and of the masculine to the soul, the divine, the ordering and the superior.[71]

A suggestive personification of nature runs throughout the book. She is allied with the devil in a campaign to prevent people from finding God (eg 26, 56, 165, 259); her methods are both direct assault and treacherous insinuation. She is the power that stands in opposition to grace or the Divine Spirit (eg 39, 70, 324). We must combat her in all her perverse, crooked and impure desires (21) because the spirit of nature is subtle, insinuating and poisonous (41); she seeks her satisfaction by secret ways (62); she is the source of seducing images and vicious affections (353).

Once again the course of action that Baker recommends for dealing with this threat is one of transcending and fleeing: we must raise ourselves out of nature into the region of the spirit (18, 19, 26, 165, 182, 337, 386). But the combative element is also present: we must enter the combat with discreet fervour (28, cf 177); we will gradually gain ground by mortification (91); we must force inferior nature to comply (289); we cannot always subdue it (333).

The imagery that presents nature as deceptive, pernicious, impure and

impulsive runs relentlessly through *Holy Wisdom*. Nature is the source of all selfishness, greed and fear and it is to be crossed and opposed in all its desires and manifestations. Often, bare nature is qualified as "sensitive" or "inferior" or "corrupt", but in other places the noun alone is used. As far as I can see Baker does not have any particular technical sense in mind for the different expressions but uses them interchangeably. In *Holy Wisdom* the image of nature is the most frequently used articulation of the enemy in the spiritual combat.

The cumulative effect of Baker's language is a powerful one. The Church taught that due to the fall the human race is "wounded in its naturals": some of the phraseology of official declarations suggests the idea of sickness. This includes *"arbitrium voluntatis in primo homine infirmatum"*[72] and even *"totumque Adam ... secundum corpus et animam in deterius commutatum fuisse."*[73] Human nature has indeed been twisted, wounded or weakened and once or twice Baker uses the language of sickness: vocal prayer is not quite enough to *cure* corrupt nature (140); *infirm* nature looks for novelty (151); *frailty* characterises our nature (167). Such language has a more positive and sympathetic ring to it: our nature is not an out and out enemy to be viewed with uncompromising hatred and disgust, but an invalid to be nursed back to health by the ministrations of grace and the Holy Spirit. However, he chooses not to exploit these nuances and instead centres on the language of conflict. Whether he intended it or not, we are left at the end of *Holy Wisdom* with an extremely pessimistic sense of the potentiality of human nature. And all this, it must be remembered, is *after* the incarnation.

III CONFLICT AND FACTORS FROM WITHOUT

j) Creatures and the world

In part II of the present chapter we considered ways in which the conflict model is used to describe what is going on within the human person. Elements that are essential parts of the bodily human person and that might be expected to have a positive or benign effect in bringing the whole person into closer union with God are presented in a way that makes them primarily mischievous and inimical. In the present part III we will look at forces that come to the arena from without.

Creatures, as the very name suggests, are made by God and may serve a positive function: "Creatures and all offices towards them served as steps to raise Adam to a more sublime and more intimate union with God" (4). Thus in themselves they are good: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected which is received with giving of thanks" (315). *Holy Wisdom* retains a sense of this positive quality although it is only expressed sporadically. Creatures are good only in so far as they are understood as an extension of God's creative power. We may love them, or, more accurately, we may love God in them: the ideal for the soul in prayer is that "she never sees (creatures) as in themselves, but only in relation to God ... and loves God in them" (279). This ideal was realised by Christ: "in all other creatures He saw nothing but God, to whom He humbled Himself in all" (275). So we too must submit ourselves to all creatures for God's sake (272) and love creatures in proportion to their virtues, the most lovable creature being "the blessed humanity of our Lord, and next thereto His heavenly Virgin Mother" (225).

Unfortunately, while this view may underlie what Baker has to say about creatures, these few references constitute the full extent of his explicit statement of it. He is far more concerned with the dangers

presented by creatures, and, as with the affections and passions, the choice of imagery builds up a dominant impression of conflict.

The words "transcend" and "forget", often taken together, run through his comments on creatures. He may have picked up this idea from *The Cloud of Unknowing*, a work to which he refers several times. The condition where all creatures are removed "is worthily called *the cloud of unknowing* and the *cloud of forgetting* by the author of that sublime treatise so-called" (464).[74] All creatures are to be transcended and forgotten (16, 95, 120, 166, 182, 215, 242, 356, 444). He enhances his claim with related verbs: abstract (10, 112), remove (75), rise above (195), pass over (205), withdraw (95, 451), exclude (403).

This cluster of escape images is supported by one of offence images: affections to creatures are to be extinguished (7), transitory things are to be loathed (272) or drowned (182), creatures including the self are to be annihilated (299). The self is linked with creatures as deserving hatred (18, 164, 213, 465, 480, 486). The reason is given using images of disgust: the self is a filthy and wretched creature (33); "our unprofitableness, vileness, and misery ... is to be the object of our aversion and hatred" (164); glancing on creatures results in "contamination and tincture" (182); their images leave a stain on the soul (242); the understanding is "bepainted" with images of creatures (464).

Baker believes that creatures are illusory as a source of lasting happiness (279) and outside of God have only "not-being" (275). His reaction to them is overwhelmingly negative. He barely pays even lip service to the sacramental understanding of creation as a verbiform embodiment of God's love. A proponent of incarnational theology may well agree that there are dangers associated with undue attachment to "creatures" such as material

possessions and food; other persons and the self, however, are made in the image of God. If one takes a doctrine of immanence seriously then they are not merely a means, and a dangerous one at that, to some sort of angelic condition. In the sacramental understanding of marriage, for example, each partner is, for the other, a real encounter with the divine love embodied. Obviously, the partner is not God; but nor is he or she simply a means, something to be transcended and forgotten. In Baker's defence, it must be remembered that he is writing for nuns and monks: nevertheless, as I suggested in the previous chapter, the Benedictine vows, an extension of the baptismal commitment, express a way of life where God is to be encountered in abbot or abbess and community, in a quasi-sacramental way.

Associated with the notion of creatures is that of the world. Baker refers to the world several times but it is not one of his central ideas. The several senses of the word in modern English are already present in the New Testament: the Greek *κοσμος* can mean universe, the earth, the inhabited world, the theatre of salvation history (all neutral concepts) or "the sum of the divine creation which has been shattered by the fall, which stands under the judgment of God."[75] Any pejorative sense has a very specific meaning. Our modern word "worldly" has picked up something of the negative sense. The question we must address to *Holy Wisdom* is whether the narrow pejorative sense invades the neutral context. By and large Baker uses "world" as a personification of worldliness: for him day to day business is to be avoided as far as possible because it is a distraction from the life of prayer. The word "vanity" recurs (16, 21, 34) as a description of worldly matters. "Withdraw ... from worldly conversation" (111) is a consistent theme (cf 16, 34, 58, 116).

Often the world stands in contrast with life in the monastery. What goes on outside the monastery must be of no interest to the religious: "abstraction from all intercourse either with the business or news of the world" is a desirable aim (68). The world is painted in bleak colours: quoting an image taken from St Paulinus he describes it as "a dry, scorched and barren wilderness" (130). Renunciation (418), contempt (419), indeed horror (195) are the recommended reactions. Baker may be over-stating the case for rhetorical effect, and he may be writing primarily for religious, but it is difficult to escape the sense of dualism that he creates between the desirable spiritual world of withdrawal and mental prayer and the undesirable material world of "ordinary" life.

k) The devil

The devil was more prominent in theological discourse in the past than he is today. I shall use the masculine pronoun for reasons of tradition rather than of sexism. The development of the idea of "the satan", the adversary, in Hebrew thought[76] led to the prominence of the demonic in the New Testament and belief in a personalized spirit of evil is evident in the writings of the fathers.[77] There seem to be two main ways of understanding the devil. The first is to see him as a personalized spiritual being; the second as a personification of evil. The actual existence of evil in human life no one would seriously deny. I suspect that modern Christians who would be agnostic about Satan as a personal being are using something akin to Occam's razor: human sinfulness is enough to explain evil without having to resort to the devil. In the early monastic writings, however, the concept of monasticism as a combat against personalized powers of evil was prominent.[78] The demonic did not replace human vice but worked with it.[79]

The Conflict Model

St Benedict's emphasis on the demonic is relatively small, although he does mention the workings of the devil in four places.[80]

Official Church teaching on the subject seems to be the outcome of applying a kind of theological logic to the bare bones of the scriptural witness: the devil is a creature,[81] was created good but fell through a free decision[82] and is not the cause of human sin except through the method of persuasion.[83] I dwell on this subject because Baker shares with his contemporaries and predecessors a firm belief in a personal devil; the devil appears frequently in the pages of *Holy Wisdom*.

He is a strongly personal force, prominent in the fall: Adam was "seduced" by our common enemy and destined for "fire and brimstone" (5), or, more precisely, his wife was seduced by the devil and Adam listened to her (40). The devil works by "illusions" (22) and "suggestions" (45, 165, 259, 389, 424); his action is a seduction (122, 464); he sets snares (115, 165, 245, 473). The images of deception are prominent: he sometimes counterfeits a good angel (94) and has a hand in sensible devotions (174, 463, 468). But if his action is normally subtle, he can assault directly (196, 300) and is moved only by malice and fury (26, 464). There is constant war with the devil, particularly over prayer (300, 314).

All this may suggest that he is an external enemy. In fact he is frequently paired with corrupt nature (56, 165, 259, 449) and he has particular power over the body. This last point is important, because it suggests a demeaning of the body in comparison to the soul. "A spiritual faculty is exempted from the devil's influences, who has great dominion over our corporeal powers" (364, cf 327). He stirs up the senses (388, 467) and works largely by planting seducing images in the imagination (122, 248, 388, 467); only when creatures are transcended is his power to fasten a

temptation foiled (444). Baker's answer to the devil's hostility is two-fold: escape from the world, because the religious life gives greater exemption from the demonic snares than does life in the world (115), and a drawing into the spirit (122).

In *Holy Wisdom*, the devil functions as a forceful combatant in the spiritual conflict. If he is external in the sense of not being an essential part of the human person, he nevertheless has great power and faithful allies within and the primary locus of his action is nature, the senses, internal and external, and among the internal, particularly the imagination. The implication seems to be that the less spiritual part of the human person is more susceptible to the power of the devil. This suggests an implicit lowering of the value of bodiliness.

1) Grace and the Holy Spirit

Thus far I have been considering the enemies in the spiritual conflict; it is now time to look at the other side. Here the main forces are grace and the Holy Spirit. In contrast to the gloomy sense of treachery, attrition and open conflict that has characterized the themes I have discussed already, Baker's appreciation of the power of grace and the Spirit is warm and optimistic. Indeed the Holy Spirit plays a remarkably prominent part in *Holy Wisdom*. Statistical evidence needs to be assessed with caution, but it is suggestive. The relative lengths of the three treatises of *Holy Wisdom* are as follows: Treatise 1, "Of an Internal Life in General", 157 pages; Treatise 2, "Of the First Instrument of Perfection, viz. Mortification", 133 pages; Treatise 3, "Of Prayer", 193 pages. The first has about 18 direct references to Christ and 44 to the Holy Spirit. The second has 14 to Christ and 8 to the Spirit. The third has 36 to Christ and 31 to

the Spirit. The grand total is 68 to Christ and 83 to the Holy Spirit. The greater emphasis on the Spirit is certainly not shared with other spiritual works with which Baker was familiar. For example, according to the index of the Classics of Western Spirituality edition of *The Cloud of Unknowing* there are 52 direct or indirect references to Christ in that work, but only 4 to the Holy Spirit.

In *Holy Wisdom*, the grace of creation ("primitive grace" or "grace of innocency" (6)) has only limited strength; but the grace of Christ, the grace of re-creation, is "medicinal, omnipotent and regenerating" (6f). The image of healing is taken up here. Baker's doctrine of grace is thoroughly in accord with the teaching of the Council of Trent. Grace is something that is given by measure (8, 30, 42, 228) and which cooperates with the "good propensions" (8, 329) which it "promotes ... and increases" (9). Grace is a free gift (23, 106, 295), but there is a mysterious mutuality between it and human effort. Mortification and internal prayer can procure greater grace (176, 183, 204, 262, 294, 300, 317, 337), yet these, for their effectiveness, depend on grace (42, 188, 295). Baker distinguishes the ordinary grace of Christians (42) from the special graces given to contemplatives (eg 356, 459). Ordinary grace helps people to carry out the ordinary virtuous and spiritual duties of the Christian life, advancing them in holiness. The graces of contemplatives lead to higher degrees of prayer and union.

The image of grace as a combatant is rare: grace supports reason in resisting sensuality, and the combat does not cease (203); a great measure of grace is required in subduing inferior passions (228). It is never personified in the way that its opponents are: it is seen as the essential nourishment and energy, but not as the fighter. A personification allied to strong physical verbs is usually more evocative than an abstract way of

talking: in *Holy Wisdom* the language of grace does not grip the imagination as powerfully as the language of corrupt nature or of disordered passions.

But perhaps this does not matter: for Baker the language of grace is subsidiary to two stronger concepts which are closely connected to it and partially overlap it. These are light and the Holy Spirit. Light carries the strength of one of the physical senses; it is ironic that an attitude which derogates the senses should be parasitic upon them if it is to articulate itself at all. The Spirit is not merely a personification of divine power, but, according to traditional Christian theology, as much "real person" as the Father or the Son.

In *Holy Wisdom*, the Spirit is very often directly associated with light: in fact possibly half the references to the Spirit include the idea of light. This is appropriate because the primary function of the Spirit for Baker is guidance: the image of the Spirit as the guide on the spiritual journey runs throughout the book. He is "a light to direct securely all their steps, and to order all their workings ... the which by the guidance of God's Holy Spirit do cause a farther advancement of them to a yet more intimate union" (15); some people are experienced in "the true internal ways of God's Spirit leading to contemplation" (73); we are urged to the "obligation to attend and follow the internal guidance of God's Spirit" (129); souls "are immediately guided by God's Holy Spirit in His internal ways" (352); a soul will be "guided and illuminated by God's Holy Spirit" (476). The examples could be multiplied. Allied to this is the image of the Spirit as teacher (58, 75, 431) or as director and master (46, 70, 82, 163, 308).

Some of the central scriptural images are used: the Spirit is the real motive force of prayer, "the cause or principle" of internal prayer

(314), praying "with groans which cannot be expressed" (338, 429);[84] he is poured into our hearts as love (16, 210).[85] He becomes the new divine principle and nature within us (165, 210).[86] He is communicated in word and sacrament (6, 40).

Thus far, Baker's doctrine of the action of the Holy Spirit in the spiritual life is in sound accord with Catholic tradition; none of what he says violates the integrity of the human person; his images are of growth and transformation by love and light. But there are two further issues we need to examine. The first is the means by which the Spirit enlightens and guides the human person: is this means quasi-magical, relying on some sort of celestial impulse? Or does he work through incarnate human experience? The second is the occurrence of conflict imagery.

Baker identifies two main ways by which the Spirit guides a human being in the spiritual life: the first is by "inspirations, lights, impulses, or calls ... such as are immediately communicated to the soul alone; the second is by the same, communicated "mediately with the concurrence of some other person or thing" (45). Within the second category fall the external director (I,2,2) and spiritual books (I,2,3); spiritual books in particular were very influential in Baker's own development.[87] The action of the Spirit through other people, through reading and so on is readily understood: these are "bodily" means of communicating to bodily persons. They could be said to have a quasi-sacramental function. The claim to direct inspiration, on the other hand, has mainly been viewed with suspicion within the Roman Church and, indeed, in other communions. Baker's teaching, it has been pointed out, "emphasizes freedom, inspiration and inward religion;"[88] but how far does it touch on the magical? By magical, I mean involving direct interventions apparently unmediated by bodily means.

I feel that *Holy Wisdom* does possess a hint of a solution to this objection. Unfortunately, Baker barely develops it. This is the notion of the Spirit transforming the human person (165) so that there is an integration of action or decision between grace and nature which are no longer two things mixed together but, in the language of chemistry, a compound rather than a mixture. Words such as "possession" (356) or "impulse" (60, 93, 462) do not really help in describing this integration because they carry the sense of intrusion from without.

Baker brings the Holy Spirit into the conflict model in several places in *Holy Wisdom*. But the main image is taken not from warfare but from the debating chamber. In Shakespeare's plays we see conscience and the fiend, perched one at each ear, attempting to win the human subject to one course of action or its opposite.[89] In *Holy Wisdom*, the two internal guides are the spirit of corrupt nature and the Divine Spirit (39). The latter attempts to lead us to renounce nature and sense (40). The theme of the divine teacher and the false teacher is picked up again (70) and is mentioned twice in the treatise on prayer (416, 470). Once or twice strong conflict words are used: the Spirit gives strength to subdue self-love (10); "immortified" (unmortified) souls resist his action (346). But these are extemely rare. For Baker "stillness, serenity, and tranquillity" proceed from the Divine Spirit, not "impetuosity and violence" (204); the state of life according to the Spirit is "peace, serenity, and repose" (490). Consistent with this belief, the imagery of violence is avoided and a strong sense of power through gentleness is built up. Therefore, quite apart from the explicit content of *Holy Wisdom*, the message is powerfully reinforced at a less conscious level by the skilful use of language.

Baker speaks positively and indeed movingly about grace and the Holy

Spirit. Nevertheless, these are factors that approach human nature from without. Obviously Christianity will never *identify* the Holy Spirit with human nature; the God/humanity dualism will remain. But in *Holy Wisdom* grace as a second gift[90] remains distinct from nature, almost as a sort of mysterious substance.

m) Active and contemplative

I will conclude this consideration of external factors in the conflict with a glance at the relationship between the active and the contemplative lives.

The distinction between the active and contemplative lives dates from classical times.[91] In the Christian tradition the distinction became the locus of a value judgement and was linked with the story of Martha and Mary.[92] I have already mentioned *The Cloud of Unknowing* as an important influence on Baker's thought and it is clear that that work considers the distinction over several chapters and maintains the superiority of the contemplative.[93] Baker's *Secretum Sive Mysticum* and commentary on the *Cloud* follow the same line.[94] In *Holy Wisdom*, however, the effect is somewhat mitigated although it is clear that he views the contemplative as "of the two the more perfect" (12). His reason is rooted in a body/spirit dualism: the contemplative state is "more spiritual, more abstracted from the body and its sensual faculties, and consequently more angelical and divine" (12).

Despite this his discussion of the differences between the active and contemplative lives in the chapter entitled "of natural propensions to devotion" (I 1 2) is characterized by a degree of common sense: he realizes that the type of devotion appropriate will depend on the natural disposition of the individual and that grace will work on this: some are predominantly

contemplative, some active and others "of a mixed disposition" (11). It is necessary to do what is most fitting. Nevertheless, Baker is writing for "persons that aspire to perfection in a contemplative life" (13); he picks up the traditional interpretation of the Martha and Mary story (12) and proceeds with the fundamental assumption of contemplative superiority: Mary has most definitely chosen *optimam partem* (16). This is linked with purity of intention (cf 171, 215, 218). We have seen his attitude towards creatures: contemplation is related to this as a state where the soul "transcends all creatures and their images" (120).

There is no real sense of conflict between the active and contemplative lives, although people naturally drawn to contemplation will find active responsibilities a particular burden. Only very occasionally does he mention misunderstandings or even hostility between the contemplative spirit and the active superior who does not really understand the former (148f). In one or two instances the antagonism felt by active souls towards contemplatives which features prominently in the *Cloud*[95] is lightly referred to: "Those that are inexperienced may, and often do, call this a state of idleness and unprofitable cessation, as Martha complained against her sister Mary" (455).[96] We know that Baker had difficulties with his actively inclined superiors;[97] occasionally the tension is made explicit (eg 142); but if there was any stronger sense of this in his own writings, it has been smoothed away in *Holy Wisdom* by the editing hand of Cressy.

A parallel contrast between the inner and the outer or the internal and the external is mentioned a number of times: an "internal contemplative life" is highly favoured and described by adjectives such as "pure" and "profound" (eg 82). External behaviour can be positive (59) but can more easily become hypocrisy than internal. Baker is making a sound point on the

principle of integrity, that the outer conduct and the inner disposition must be harnessed together, but there is always a vague sense of the contrast between the bodily and the spiritual: that "inner behaviour" is somehow different as well as being more meritorious or graceful or perfect than the corporal works of mercy.

IV THE IMAGERY OF *HOLY WISDOM*

n) The conflict language of Holy Wisdom

It should be clear from what has been said in the present chapter that Baker makes considerable use of language suggesting conflict in many of its forms and that the conflict takes place primarily within the arena of the human person. Odd phrases suggesting such conflict run throughout the book, and sometimes there are extended passages where this is the primary metaphor. It would supplement my comments thus far to quote two longer passages. The first is from I,1,4 (21) and the words and phrases to note are in upper case:

> [The erroneous belief that recent converts to the spiritual life are not making progress] proceeds from a preconceived mistake, that because in times of light and devotion the soul finds herself carried with much fervour to God, and perceives but SMALL CONTRADICTIONS AND REBELLIONS in inferior nature, therefore she is very forward in the way of perfection. Whereas it is far otherwise; for nature is not so easily CONQUERED as she imagines ... Many changes she must expect ... and presently after, it may be, FIERCER COMBATS than before ...
>
> Yea, it will likely happen to such souls, that even the formerly well-known grosser defects in them will seem to increase, and to grow MORE HARD TO BE QUELLED after they have been competently ADVANCED in internal ways; and the reason is, because, having set themselves to COMBAT corrupt nature in all her PERVERSE, CROOKED impure desires, and being sequestered from the vanities of the world, they find themselves in continual WRESTLINGS AND AGONIES ... But if they would take courage ... they would find that such VIOLENT temptations are an assured sign that they are in a secure and happy way, and that when God sees it is best for them, they shall come off

from such COMBATS with VICTORY and comfort.

This long quotation is from one page of a chapter entitled "Of the necessity of a strong resolution" which might be expected to make use of such imagery. The second is from a single paragraph in a chapter entitled "of tranquillity of mind" (II,1,8, p 206):

> Such TROUBLE is small and scarce considerable; for notwithstanding it, the superior soul partakes nothing of it, but REIGNS in that upper region of light and peace, and from thence LOOKS DOWN upon sensuality, either as a thing DIVIDED from itself, in whose imperfections and DISORDERS she is nothing concerned, being as it were safe locked up from them in A STRONG TOWER, or else she SUPPRESSES all such motions in their first BREAKING OUT, in virtue of that DOMINION which ... she hath gained over them.

In these examples it is not the individual words that matter so much: taken in isolation, several of them may be neutral or applicable in several other metaphorical contexts. What I wish to point out is their cumulative effect on the reader who, even if not particularly sensitive to metaphor, may well absorb a subliminal impression. This impression is not one of the essential unity of the human person: what is evoked is a sense of dis-integration and conflict. In the final section of the present chapter I will make some remarks about the way in which Baker's use of conflict relates to the use of conflict by other spiritual writers.

o) The journey model

I have concentrated exclusively on the model of conflict. It may be asked whether this is the only model of the spiritual life used in *Holy Wisdom*. We need to look at another that finds a prominent place, although its use complements rather than undermines the conflict model.

The spiritual life can only be described using metaphors; the person engaged in this life is, for instance, "getting closer" to God (a spatial

metaphor that has become, in non-religious parlance, an expression for increasing intimacy), or "growing" in holiness (an organic metaphor). What these metaphors are attempting to describe is a change in the quality of the relationship between God and the person. Possibly the most common such metaphor in the Christian tradition is that of journey (and its related ideas of pilgrimage, quest, search, movement or progress). This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that for bodily human beings a most obvious change is that from place A to place B.

The use of travel imagery is so common that it almost escapes notice. This is partly because some of the words, "progress" for example, are already used metaphorically in a secular context. Baker's conflict imagery is striking; his journey imagery far less so. Certain words are used with great frequency: "souls that first enter into the interior *ways* of the spirit, or that have made no great *progress* in them ..." (20). "Ways" occurs frequently (eg 23, 39, 96, 110, 384) as does "progress" (eg 233, 293, 350). Other words that are already metaphorical include "advancement" (probably the most common, eg 176, 190, 285, 329, 400, 412, 437) and "arrival" (281, 294, 492).

More interesting are the places where Baker is overt in his use of a journey model and where he qualifies ordinary journey words. Examples of the former include his long parable of the pilgrim, several pages lifted from Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* (I, 1, 6).[98] The style is markedly different from that of the rest of *Holy Wisdom* and the allegory clear: "the parable of a devout pilgrim desirous to travel to Jerusalem (which he interprets the vision of peace or contemplation)" (31). "He that runs, if he be able to hold on, will sooner come to his journey's end than he that contents himself with an ordinary travelling pace" (190). The soul is "to run speedily and lightly in the course of virtues" (296). Describing how

different souls can reach the same end from different starting points, he writes "several ways or paths ... from distant places lead to a city ... (and) at last fall into and make one common highway" (481). The end is represented by a physical place, several times "the top of the mountain" (293, cf 492). The images of running and the mountain are, of course, scriptural, but Baker has probably got them via the Rule of St Benedict.[99]

In one place Baker is explicit about the use of this model: "It is generally the custom of those that write treatises of spiritual doctrine to begin with a division of the several stations or ascents ... in the spiritual progress" (350). In several places he elaborates the bare metaphor: "a very long tedious way" (19), "the length of the way" (23), "contrary ways ... endless labyrinths" (39), "secret paths" (97).[100]

In itself this model of journeying fits perfectly well with incarnational theology. It has a different application from the conflict model. Journeying describes the fact of change in the spiritual life; conflict the manner in which that change has to come about. The two models are sometimes brought together: the way to perfection is long and tedious because of the opposition of nature (19); there are "two internal guides in all Christians" vying as to the direction of the journey (39); "inordinate affections" will prevent the soul's ascending to the top of the mountain (293); the soul "by resisting stronger temptations ... doth make greater strides and paces" (293); souls have to "resolutely break through all difficulties and continue ... to the great advancement of their spirit" (329); "she hath struggled through terrible oppositions of the devil and corrupt nature" but still keeps her way (449).

There are occasional references to longing (eg in III, 4, 2 "of the prayer of aspirations") and to healing (very rare). Journeying, however, is

far more frequently used. What is significant is that these models do not detract from the effect of the conflict model which remains the strongest and most overt and, as we have seen, gives a particular flavour to the journey.

p) Summary and conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter has been to develop a detailed consideration of Baker's use of the conflict model. After preliminary comments on the notion of model, I traced the occurrence of conflict in the scriptures and glanced at its presence in Christian tradition. It is a prevalent model used in complex ways; it is scriptural and traditional and must be accommodated within the framework of incarnational theology. It finds a particularly prominent place in strands of spiritual tradition which inspired Baker. For example, commenting on the theory of early monasticism, García Colombás writes: "According to St Jerome, to become a monk is equivalent to entering a battle, *ad praelium festinare.* 'Great is the battle of the monks,' admits St John Chrysostom. For Cassian, the monastic life largely consists in a long spiritual combat. St Pachomius constantly exhorted his disciples to fight unwearyingly."[101] The main opponents in the *militia spiritualis* are Satan and the demons, but the battle is also against vices.[102] Military metaphors are frequent in the Rule of St Benedict.[103] Conflict imagery is found in much spiritual writing through the centuries and one 16th century writer who influenced Baker goes so far as to call his work *The Spiritual Conflict*.[104] Even the modern liturgy of the Roman rite makes use of the model: the collect for Ash Wednesday reads, "Support us, Lord, as with this lenten fast we begin our Christian warfare, so that in doing battle against the spirit of evil we may be armed with the weapon of

self-denial."

My objections are not to the model itself: the idea of fighting one's own evil and selfishness may well be a challenging and inspiring way of looking at spiritual and personal development. But what I am questioning is the manner in which conflict is used by Baker and his spiritual precursors. In parts II and III of this chapter I discussed the exact locus of conflict for Baker. In part II I showed how he used affections and passions, images and the imagination, senses and sensuality, and nature. By close attention to the cumulative impact of his language and imagery and to the more overt anthropological implications of what he said, I suggested that elements which, for incarnational theology, would be positive or at least neutral, had been drawn into the arena as hostile combatants.

In chapter 3 I argued the goodness of creation and the value of human embodiment, and I drew out the central anthropological corollary of integration as well as the subsidiary one of the importance of the emotions. Baker's Augustinian pessimism has two main implications which run contrary to the incarnational criteria developed in that chapter. Firstly, the various parts of the embodied human person, the affections, the senses and so forth, are seen as so vitiated that they are viewed as hostile *in themselves*. Thus essential allies, which may admittedly need control or redirection, are treated as enemies. This runs contrary to the principle of integration: it is difficult to see how an embodied human person can develop as a Christian without this integration.

The second implication is subtler and more pervasive: it centres on the presumed superiority of the spiritual over the bodily. At root and to varying degrees, the passions, senses and so on are associated with the body and *for that reason* are not really desirable partners in spiritual

development. The tacit ideal for Baker, and for those like him, is a kind of angelism.[105] The most insidious level of conflict turns on an attitude of contempt towards the bodily which is clearly contrary to the incarnational principles of embodiment and integration.

In part III of the present chapter I considered the conflict with external factors such as creatures and the world, the devil, and grace and the Holy Spirit. I argued that Baker's attitude to creatures and the world does not accord adequately with the understanding of creation and the sacraments developed in chapter 3. Baker sees the devil as primarily associated with bodily elements such as the senses and thus underlines the evaluative dualism between the bodily and the spiritual. His discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit, while warm and extensive, maintains a strong grace/nature distinction.

In part IV I took a broader view of the conflict language of *Holy Wisdom* and, by way of a glance at the journey model, maintained the primacy of the conflict model. In any case the journey model works with rather than against the conflict model.

These summarizing and concluding remarks necessarily lack some of the more nuanced treatment in the various sections of this chapter. In a word, what I have argued is that the conflict model is central in *Holy Wisdom* and is at variance with the incarnational principles of embodiment and integration. In the next chapter I will consider more closely Baker's understanding of the human person as an individual. The discussion there will provide a broader context for what I have said here about conflict.

Sr, I was glad to understande of yor life and
healthe, wch his bearer being lykwise in his
parties, made knowen unto me. I shall praie
to god that the prolonging of yor daies maie
be a meane to dispose yow for ye better dispo=
sition, wherin it shall please god to call yow out
of his tonvertein and sherp life. Ever since
my coming wth yow I have lived in a cittie in
this forein parties, called Cambraie, affording
a convent of tertain religious Englishe women
of the order of St Bennet nowlie erected.
They are in number as yet but 29. They are
inclosed and never seen by ab nor by anie
other unlesse it be rarelie upon an extra=
ordinarie occasion, but upon no occasion
maie they go forthe, nor maie anie man
or woman gothe in unto them. Yet I have
my dirt from them and upon occasions
converse wth them, but see not one another;
and live in a cloyse adioining to theirs, wherein
contemplative the roman bookes of ye mourdee are
not for their purpose, and litle or nothing is in
the olde printed Englishe that is prop for them. There
were manie Englishe bookes in olde time written
by some here heare some, yet they want manie and
therupon I am in their behalfe bolde an
humble suitor unto yow, to bestowe on them some
bookes as yow please, either manuscript or printed
being in Englishe, containing contemplation Saints lives
or other devotions. Hampooles workes are prop.
for them. I write I find Richard Scala perfections
in latin; it would helpe the understanding of
latin) in Englishe, and some of them understande
the Englishe onlie [illegible]. Eyther
favour yow shall do them herein, will be had in
memorie both towarde yow and yor posteritie,
wherein it maie please god to sende some helper
to be of ye number, as there is alreadie one of
her name ifl not of yor kindred. This bearer
will convey either suche bookes as it shall please
yow to single out and deliver to him. If during
my humble service to be remembred in my Ladie
adie for whose sowle wth yor owne and your
posteritie my praier and best servant will be
gladde to have suche particular occasion as this
will be an testimonie of my thankfull remembrance, wherein you
shall not be wanting.

Cambraye ye 3d of
June 1629.

Yor bedsman and
servant in christ

Augn: Baker

Autograph letter of Baker to Sir Robert Cotton
(courtesy of British Library, Cotton, Julius C. III, f.12)

CHAPTER 5

"THE SOUL IS SO RAISED ABOVE THE BODY . . ."

THE HUMAN PERSON: INDIVIDUAL

a) Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that the image of conflict provides the primary model for Baker's discussion of the spiritual life. The conflict is located mainly within the human person although external forces such as the Holy Spirit and the devil also participate. It is true that conflict does have a place in the scriptures and in Christian tradition, but the way it is understood in *Holy Wisdom* runs contrary to the integrated understanding of the human person and the concerns of incarnational theology as developed in chapter 3.

In the present chapter I shall consider Baker's understanding of the human person as an individual. Although the discussion of the previous chapter will provide a background, I shall not approach the subject with the conflict model as a primary point of focus. I shall be looking to see whether Baker's attitudes and assumptions are out of harmony with incarnational theology. Part I will deal with the body, part II with the soul, part III with the spirit and part IV with faculties of the soul.

I THE BODY

b) The body and bodiliness

In Chapter 3 I considered differing attitudes to the body in Greek and Hebrew tradition and advocated an incarnational theology which includes an

integrated understanding of the human person. I showed how the ascetical teaching of some spiritual writers suggests a less than positive assessment of the body in comparison with the soul. In the present section I shall consider the understanding of the body and bodiliness in *Holy Wisdom* and shall attempt to evaluate Baker's position in the light of incarnational theology.

In general Baker takes a fairly pragmatic line on the body; he never rejoices in bodiliness, never dwells on its God-given status and never relates it directly to the incarnation. On the other hand, despite a Platonic strand, purely negative comments are not numerous. At best the body is inferior to the soul or spirit and is to be treated in a way conducive to spiritual progress. At worst it is dangerous and requires firm practical controls. Nevertheless, Baker tacitly assumes the centrality of bodily experience in his acknowledgement of its role in generating metaphors for describing the spiritual life: he talks of mystics struggling to express their experiences. "They are forced to invent new words the best they can, or to borrow similitudes from corporal things..." (61).

The next four sections of the present chapter will deal with Baker's view of the body and bodiliness. Section c) will present his neutral exposition: it will deal with the bodily constitution of the human person and its relation to the spiritual life, bodily experiences in prayer and will end with a concluding remark. Section d) will deal with the superiority of the spiritual over the bodily and will evaluate the reasons Baker gives for caring for the body. Section e) will assess the anti-bodily strands in *Holy Wisdom*, considering the language of "carnal", the value of corporal affliction, the body seen as dangerous and Platonic elements of disparagement of the body. Section f) will make some concluding remarks on

the argument of these sections. Part I of the present chapter will conclude with sections g) and h) in which the issues of sickness and angelism, loosely related to the theme of the body, will be discussed.

c) The body: Baker as neutral expositor

When considering the make-up of the human character, Baker retains, with contemporaries such as Shakespeare, the language of medieval psychology. A person's "complexion" or "temperament" was his or her particular blend of "humours" which are the bodily fluids determining a person's disposition.[2] Thus there was believed to be a close correlation between bodily factors such as blood or phlegm and corresponding personality traits such as being sanguine or phlegmatic. There is no evidence in *Holy Wisdom* that Baker retains the full medieval notion, but he does assume a link between "bodily humours" and spiritual dispositions.

At the fall the forbidden fruit caused "miserable depravations" in the soul and "irreparably disordered that most healthful, exact temper of (our first parents') bodily constitutions" (5). Nevertheless, there remains among human beings a natural propension to seek God which varies "according to their several dispositions and corporal complexions" (8). More than once Baker emphasises the fact that God does not violate our "natural complexion" but works with it (9, 55). On the other hand, devotion arising from "a mere natural temper of the body" is to be suspected (326, cf 152), although some "tender souls" will make greater use than others of their corporal nature in generating affections to God (385). There is a value in a person knowing "the exactly true state and complexion of his body" (67), for then he or she can determine an appropriate pattern of asceticism. Baker lauds the "ancient monks" whose bodily complexions could cope with more

rigorous asceticism than can modern monks (123, 136).

While the Spirit may work with corporal nature and "the material disposition in corporal nature" may help in some trials (293), Baker makes two strong points: firstly, bodily factors can be detrimental to prayer and render us particularly susceptible to temptation. The distemper of the body increases fears (336, cf 267); the imagination may be distempered according to the disposition of humours and spirits in the body (247); the height of prayer can be lowered by corporal factors (356); inferior temptations may affect the motions of the body (249). Secondly, the work of the Spirit does not depend on corporal conditions (152, 331 cf 330, 415).

On several occasions Baker considers bodily experiences that sometimes accompany prayer: he does not dismiss these as valueless but in general views them with suspicion. He warns the soul not to give free scope to tears because they may impair the body (328). What he seems to be saying is that tears may be self-induced or merely sentimental. There is danger in prayer that causes "stirrings and pleasing motions in corporal nature" (403). Nevertheless, he acknowledges that there is a gift of tears that the Holy Spirit may give to perfect souls.

The following quotation, from the chapter on sensible devotion (III, 1, 5) is of interest:

> The special signs and effects of such sensible devotion are oft-times very conspicuous in the alteration caused by it in corporal nature, drawing tears from the eyes, producing heat and redness in the face, springing motions in the heart (like to the leaping of a fish in the waters, saith Harphius), and in some it causes so perceivable an opening and shutting in the heart, saith he, that it may be heard ..." (325f)

The paragraph continues in this vein for several more lines indicating how such experiences may start to go wrong. The reason they go wrong is because the person concerned takes too much delight in them; they become an

end in themselves. Nevertheless, as in the case of the Franciscan Br Bernard (462), Baker can view bodily effects of prayer with tolerance; if such effects spring from a divine principle then they must have value.

Baker does recognise a harmony between "external comportment" and internal condition (55) although men and women are more distinguishable by their internal dispositions than by "outward features" (10). He does recognise the fact that human beings are bodily and he makes some attempt to include this fact in his discussion of the spiritual life. While his comments are neutral, however, his tone reveals a particular attitude towards bodiliness. Except in the case of the overt bodily experiences mentioned above, "suspicious" would be too strong a word to describe this attitude. There is, rather, an uneasiness and a sense that the body must keep to its station. When all is said and done, Baker may accept a sort of harmony between the bodily and the spiritual but the former is certainly inferior to the latter. We must now turn to this issue.

d) The superiority of the spiritual over the bodily

For the purposes of the present context I am not concerned with technical differences between "soul" and "spirit"; such matters will be dealt with later in this chapter. What I am concerned with is the evaluation of the spiritual side of the human person in relation to the bodily. That the spiritual is of more importance than the bodily is a fundamental assumption in *Holy Wisdom*. "By how much the spirit is more excellent and noble than the body, by so much are spiritual exercises more profitable than corporal" (128); "any matter that concerns the body, health, fortunes, life, etc ..." is of less importance than "the solid good of (the) soul" (236f). Referring to St Bernard, Baker tells us that "as man was not made for the woman, but the

woman for man, so spiritual exercises were not made for corporal, but corporal for spiritual" (427); finally, "the soul is not to serve the body, but the body the soul; so that if one of them must ... be the loser, it is most just that the loss should lie on the body's side" (433).

The evaluation is related to prayer: Baker speaks with approval of the "high degree of humility" where "the soul is so raised above the body ... that it hath lost all care and solicitude about it" (280); in prayer all bodies and bodily images must be transcended (313); indeed, "the soul comes to operate ... more elevated above the corporal organs and faculties, so drawing nearer to the resemblance of the operations of an angel or separated spirit" (453). A later section of the present chapter will deal with Baker's angelism but it is worth pointing out here the implication of the final phrases of the last quotation: it would be better to worship without a body ("a separated spirit") were that possible, than with one.

In view of this superiority of the spiritual, it is perhaps a little surprising to discover that Baker's attitude to the treatment of the body in practice is mild and moderate. But this moderation does not arise from any sense of reverence or respect for the body: "Just it is that some due regard be had to the body" but "this is not so much for the body's sake as the spirit's, which, since in this life it cannot work without the body, by too violent workings it may so weaken the body as that it will not be enabled for continuance" (433). Moderation is urged strongly: the person must "consider the infirmity of the body" (81, cf 60, 71, 74, 91, 96, 186, 190, 199) but all the time the support of the body is for the good of the soul (230, 233): harm will come "to the spirit by too much enfeebling the body" (232).

e) Anti-bodily strands in Holy Wisdom

I have considered the neutral elements of Baker's understanding of the body and the evaluative assumption that places the spiritual above the bodily. The overall impression so far is that there is a subtle disparagement of the body, at least in comparison with the spiritual. We now need to consider whether this prevailing mood is hardened through the use of language and notions which are overtly anti-bodily.

Let us first consider his use of the word "carnal". It occurs several times in the first treatise but only once or twice in the second and third. It invariably carries a pejorative sense and is equivalent to "worldly" or to "sinful". This might lead us to believe that he is using it in a straightforward Pauline sense where the flesh *(caro)* represents the principle of sin in the human being which stands over against the spirit or the divine principle. Baker talks of "carnal reason" (25, 87), "carnal desires" (34, 39, 318) and "carnal will" (167). Thus far he seems to be talking in a Pauline sense. But there are some references which suggest that he moves away from this to a position where "carnal" is associated with "bodily" or "material": He talks of the mind being freed from inordinate affection to all worldly and carnal objects (105). But the crucial quotation is where he contrasts "carnal open sins" with "the more dangerous sins of the spirit" (150). Here "carnal" seems to mean "bodily".

I wish to draw only a tentative conclusion from this discussion of Baker's use of "carnal": He is using the word predominantly in a Pauline sense, but I suggest that there has been a slight shift in his mind in the direction of "bodily"; thus "bodily" picks up a hint of the pejorative sense.

In a later section of the present chapter I will consider Baker's theology of sickness; here we need merely to notice that a certain value is

placed on corporal affliction. Hard corporal labours "afflicting to the body" serve "for the greater good of the spirit" (138, cf 137). He quotes with approval the dictum of St Hildegarde: "the love of God doth not usually dwell in robust bodies" (232) and the opinion of Tauler "that the condition of the dearest and most perfect servants of God is to have their souls full of the divine love and their bodies full of pains" (428). Corporal vigour is not conducive to spiritual progress: too much vigour in the corporal nature of the young hinders their reaching God (23); internal prayer abates the vigorousness of the body (433); souls arriving at the perfect prayer of contemplation are able to neglect and forget the body (234). While some of this is certainly said with a view to encouraging those in poor health, the impression is created that bodily health and well-being are not entirely desirable in one who seeks God.

Indeed, this attitude is taken even further and, although we find little of the overt conflict language which Baker uses elsewhere, the body comes to be perceived as a definite hindrance to progress in the spiritual life: "We have small reason to love the body, for it is that which one way or other is the cause of almost all the sins which the soul commits" (233). The body is particularly susceptible to the power of Satan "who has great dominion over our corporeal powers" (364, cf 327).

I have already made reference in chapter 3 to a particular aspect of Platonic thought which views the body in a negative way. In some Christian circles this negative view was taken to extremes: a diabolic origin of the human body, a view attributed to the Manichaeans and Priscillians, was condemned at the Council of Braga in 561: *Si quis plasmationem humani corporis diaboli dicit esse figmentum, et conceptiones in uteris matrum operibus dicit daemonum figurari ... anathema sit.*[3] But if the extreme

position is soundly condemned, there are, nevertheless, intermediate views that set up, albeit by implication, a conflict between body and soul or spirit. There is a strand in *Holy Wisdom* which adopts a Platonic line with regard to the body, remembering, of course, that Plato himself was not unequivocal on this issue.

There are four main references that need detailed investigation. First, the opening words of the book tell us that God was moved by goodness "to create man after His own image and similitude, consisting of a frail earthly body, *which is the prison of an immortal, intellectual spirit*" (3). The image of the body as the prison of the soul is clearly taught in the Platonic dialogues. "Pure were we, without taint of that prison house which now we are encompassed withal, and call a body."[4] Viewing the body as a prison is very far from the integrated understanding of the human person which I have been arguing is a correct incarnational view. Indeed, it is difficult to see how it can be consistent with the article of faith, prominent in the earliest creeds,[5] about the resurrection of the body. It would be a strange idea to resurrect a prison and certainly the Greek philosophers would have rejected such a resurrection.[6] Nevertheless, a few lines further on, Baker explicitly affirms his faith in the resurrection of the body, talking of "eternal beatitude both in soul and body in heaven" (3); the Platonic and credal strands are in conflict.

If there were only one such reference in *Holy Wisdom*, we might view it as a maverick, but there are several others. "Self-love and pride may by mortification be subdued," Baker says later, "yet as long as we are *imprisoned in mortal bodies of flesh and blood*, they will never be totally rooted out of us" (165). Once again we see implicit here the Platonic notion that the real "me" is other than my body which is not merely a neutral

package but a prison.

Thirdly, the temptation to take pleasure in food and drink is such that "even the most perfect souls which have abandoned all other occasions, *yet being imprisoned in bodies* that need daily refection, are continually exposed to this" (230). Again we see the dualism of body and soul with the negative assessment of the body.

Finally, in another place, although the prison image is not used, the body becomes an explicit enemy, in conflict with the soul. "The body being gross and lumpish cannot long endure that the soul, its companion, should remain in its proper exercise *by which it becomes as it were a stranger to the body*" (334). The clear implication here is that growth in the spiritual life should bring about an estrangement between soul and body, an estrangement that the body resists, but the enlightened soul seeks. This is the philosophy of the *Phaedo* rather than the theology of the Scriptures.

Other hints of Platonic thought are to be found in *Holy Wisdom:* sense images in prayer are disparaged because they are merely "shadows of truth" (388). The very last words of the book see the end as an "intellectual heaven" (492). It may well be the case that these are common-place ideas in the patristic spiritual tradition,[7] but in a sense it is such ideas that we are subjecting to critical scrutiny, through a critique of Baker. There seems to be little reference in the fathers to the notion of the body as the prison of the soul.[8] Origen may be exceptional and his view of the body as a fetter of the soul is condemned;[9] the Origenist notion that human souls have fallen into bodies as a punishment for sin is anathematised by a canon promulgated at the second Council of Constantinople.[10]

The Platonic references in Baker serve to underline the fundamental conflict that we have already identified, and that conflict has at its roots

an implicit dualism that is here made explicit. They also express a disparagement of the body and bodily experience.

f) Preliminary concluding remarks

In chapter 4 we considered Baker's assumption of a conflict model in his discussion of the spiritual life. It would be untrue to say that this model is applied in any explicit or straightforward way to the relationship between the bodily and the spiritual. By and large, intense conflict language is avoided when talking about the body. In terms of practical asceticism there is a down-to-earth and balanced attitude. Nevertheless, the implication of the incarnational theology I have been advocating is that the body is not merely neutral but positive; it is essential to human experience and something to rejoice in. Baker never moves beyond the neutral: in fact, the underlying tone is negative. The strong sense of the superiority of the soul over the body has led to a disparagement of the body. We will consider further his attitude to the body in the next two sections which deal with two related issues: his theology of sickness and his angelism.

g) A theology of sickness

Holy Wisdom includes a chapter entitled "How prayer is to be practised in sickness" (III, 3, 5) and there are several other references to physical sickness. We need to consider Baker's understanding of sickness and to see whether it throws further light on his attitude to the body and bodiliness. At least one reason for his interest in this topic must be the delicateness of his own health: Prichard's biography tells us that he was "almost all his life a weak and sickly man" and that this was not due to "indiscretion either in corporall or spirituall exercises."[1] In addition we

should remember that Baker was writing in an age when sickness was prevalent and there was little relief of pain.[12]

The New Testament clearly portrays Jesus as a healer of the whole person, both bodily and spiritual. This understanding of healing passed into the early Church: the prayer of blessing of the *oleum infirmorum*, used in the Roman Catholic rite, probably derives from the bishop's *Emitte* prayer, recorded by Hippolytus in 197 AD: it prays that those anointed with the oil will be "made well again in body, mind and soul".[13] The Council of Trent sees spiritual healing as the primary purpose of the sacrament but acknowledges that the sick person may "sometimes regain bodily health, if this is expedient for the health of the soul."[14] The revised rite returns to a more integrated view of the human person: it emphasises that Christ was concerned for the well-being of the "whole person" (*totum hominem*); "the sacrament of anointing prolongs the concern which the Lord himself showed for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the sick."[15] This integrated approach accords with the incarnational theology that I have been advocating whereas Trent assumes a greater body/soul distinction and an evaluation in favour of the soul.

Baker would certainly agree with the Tridentine position; what we need to consider is whether he goes further, in the direction of a negative assessment of bodily health. As I have already discussed in a previous section, for Baker, the moderate well-being of the body is important, not because it is good in itself but for the sake of the spiritual life. Thus, excessive spiritual activities and mortifications, which may damage the bodily health, are to be avoided (cf 96, 462). When sickness does occur it may have several positive effects: it may bring an "ill liver" in the world to conversion (151); it tends to "drive a soul to seek and adhere to God"

(417); bodily sickness may be a God-given means of spiritual health (421); it can be linked with the sufferings of Our Lord (429, a highly untypical point for Baker and one that is not taken any further in what might seem an appropriate context). His teaching on sickness concludes: "it is certain that a soul cannot possibly have a firmer ground of assurance of eternal happiness than a sanctified use of sickness" (432).

If he draws positive implications from his consideration of bodily sickness, we need now to assess whether he views it as a desirable or at least a neutral condition. At one point he comments on a possible conflict between bodily health and the good of the soul: he praises the perfect who "abstain ... ofttimes to some prejudice of health for the greater good of the soul." Indeed, "a robustious health uninterrupted is not convenient to such a one" (67). I have already quoted in section e) Baker's reference to St Hildegarde: "The love of God doth not usually dwell in robust bodies" (232). He quotes Tauler, "that the condition of the dearest and most perfect servants of God is to have their souls full of the divine love and their bodies full of pains" (428). Even St Benedict "purposely made choice of unwholesome places to build his monasteries in, as being desirous that his religious should rather be infirm than robust" (428). Slightly grudgingly it seems, he admits "it cannot be denied that it is lawful and fitting for a sick person to desire and seek remedies proper in that case" (426), nevertheless, "it is nothing considerable, as in itself, whether the body have ease or no; all the matter is how it fares with the spirit" (427).

Is Baker merely being extremely encouraging to those who are in fact sick? Is he even, as in the St Benedict reference, talking tongue in cheek? Whatever his purposes, we need to assess the impression he creates. Bodily health, "as in itself" (427), is not seen as positive and desirable; indeed,

it is rather detrimental to the spiritual life. Here he goes further than the implications of the Council of Trent. His position turns on a distinction, indeed, almost a conflict, between the bodily and the spiritual lives. His aim is the supremacy of the spiritual rather than the health of the whole person. His consideration of sickness, therefore, serves to support the conclusions we reached in the previous section.

h) Angelism

For St Thomas Aquinas angels and humans are entirely different beings, one of the main differences being that the former are incorporeal'[16] and do not have bodies as part of their nature: "Angels are not by nature conjoined with bodies."'[17] Despite Aquinas' further statement that "an intellectual substance which is not united with a body is more perfect than one which is," we need to bear in mind the force of the opening of the letter to the Hebrews: "It was not to angels that God subjected the world to come" but to Christ the incarnate who will bring with him "many sons to glory."'[18] The perfection of the human being is to be completely human, like Christ, not to be angelic.

Nevertheless, there has been a tendency among some Christian spiritual writers to try to live the "angelic life" and this has sometimes been allied with a severe attitude to the body.'[19] There are several references in *Holy Wisdom* to human beings striving to be like angels. One could not build a strong case on these references alone, but they need to be considered because they strengthen the conclusions I have already reached on Baker's attitudes to the body.

For Baker, the contemplative life is "more sublime and perfect" than the active, because it is "more abstracted from the body ... and consequently

more angelical and divine" (12). It would be better for a human being to be free of the body and "like an angel": the soul would cry out "'O Lord, free me from these my corporal necessities'; for were it not for them she might always, like an angel, be in constant contemplation" (234). The soul should strive to elevate itself above creatures to a mystical union which "is properly the exercise of angels ... Now in Holy Scripture our chiefest happiness and perfection are ... that we shall be like unto angels" (451, cf 464, 478). Baker may be thinking primarily of sharing in the exalted knowledge and understanding of angels, but very important for him is "to be elevated above the corporal organs and faculties" (453), indeed, "to be all spirit and, as it were, separated from the body" (490). On the other hand we might point out in his favour that nowhere does he relate his preference for the angelic to the belief that angels were sexless.

This angelism is related to his Platonism which we discussed earlier in the present chapter. Once again there is the sense that the body is rather a nuisance and that it would be far more satisfactory if human beings could become angels. An implicit angelism runs throughout *Holy Wisdom* and represents one of the fundamental points of variance with the requirements of the incarnationalism developed in chapter 3. Its problem is that it undervalues embodied human personhood and attempts to locate holiness away from embodiment. We have seen something of this already in the previous sections dealing with the body: we shall meet it again as an attitude underlying Baker's understanding of the soul.

II THE SOUL

1) The soul: introduction

Soul is the central anthropological term in *Holy Wisdom:* it is used several hundred times in the course of the book. I have already discussed some Greek and Hebrew concepts of soul in chapter 3. The theological understanding in the west, as developed by Thomas Aquinas and witnessed by conciliar statements, moved away from any Platonic tendency to dualism in favour of an approach that showed Aristotelian influence. The terms "body" and "soul" were still used but with a greater integration than the use of the two separate substantives would suggest. As Timothy Suttor says in the introduction to his edition of *Summa Theologiae* 1a 75-83, "talk of 'body' and 'soul', which strongly suggest two *things* to us, colours a treatise which from beginning to end insists they are not two things but two sides of one single thing, a man."[20] It is worth repeating here ideas developed in chapter 3, section g): for Aquinas, the soul is not the human person any more than the hand or the foot is the human person. "It was because Plato held that sensation belonged to the soul as such that he could speak of man as a soul using a body;" but in fact "it belongs to the very conception of 'man' that he have soul, flesh and bone."[21] For Aquinas the soul is the form of the body: it communicates its own act of being to physical matter.[22] That the soul is the form of the body is a position reiterated by official Church teaching: anyone who asserts *quod substantia animae rationalis seu intellective vere ac per se humani corporis non sit forma* is in error.[23] Later Church statements repeat this position.[24]

As I have already pointed out, *Holy Wisdom* does not use its terms with the precision that a philosopher would favour. Nevertheless, what I

will do in the following sections is to analyse Baker's use of *soul* and see whether his assumptions have implications that run contrary to the integration of the human person. Section j) will consider the view that the soul is the real person; sections k) and l) will look respectively at the understanding of the soul as spirit and the distinction between the superior and inferior soul.

j) The soul as the person

In modern English we still use "soul" in some contexts to mean "person": examples are "poor soul" and "there's not a soul in sight." If Baker's use of soul to mean "person" is simply following this rather vague usage then there need be no problem. He does use other terms to refer to the human person: "spiritual internal liver" (45, 49, 67, 411), "Christian" (42, 46, 99, 103), "religious person" (99, cf 109, 123, 184, 194, 232, 235, 285 etc), "subject" (100, 101, 410), God's servant (86, 114). Whenever any of these is used he invariably accompanies it with the masculine pronoun.

But the word he employs most frequently to refer to the human person is "soul": this is used several hundred times and always carries the feminine pronoun. Sometimes a combination of these terms reads rather strangely. A couple of examples will demonstrate this: Baker has mentioned "religious or spiritual persons" (183) and continues

> if such an one had not pursued an internal life, *he* would have perhaps enabled *himself* to quit one pleasure by diverting *himself* from thence to some other, which would have recompensed and satisfied for that loss ... ; whereas, in a spiritual life, a soul having in resolution abandoned all sensual pleasures ... *she* cannot recompense the bitterness ...(184)

In a second example, he has been referring to "a secular devout person" who

"may reap much benefit, applying to *his* own use so much of the spirit of

religion as discretion will show to be fruitful to *him* ..." Then he suddenly shifts the "person" word and says "such a soul, though *she* be not obliged really and personally to withdraw *herself* from worldly conversation ..." (111).[25]

Although many of Baker's treatises were addressed to nuns, his use of the masculine in all other contexts proves that he is not using the feminine for soul because he is thinking of women.[26] In view of the fact that the Latin *anima* is feminine, his use of the feminine is understandable.[27]

It might be thought that Baker is using "soul" in a technical sense to mean something like "the individual person in relation to God," that the feminine suggests passivity and that this is the appropriate attitude towards the divine initiative (at one point Baker refers to the spiritual person as "the patient" (426)).[28] But there are many occasions when "soul" means simply "person", as when he refers to the soul with "her habit (and) tonsure" (131) or "such ignorant tender souls (especially women)" (252) or "the death of well-willed or well-disposed souls" (23). In the following quotation "soul" is exactly equivalent to "Christian": "the duty of a Christian (much more of a soul that aspires to perfection) is to love nothing at all but God" (168). Examples of this usage could be multiplied. It seems that for Baker, the soul is the person: "mortifications do regard the whole soul with all the faculties of it (and consequently the whole person)" (207).

We will see in the next section that this is not the full story: running alongside this sense is a rather different understanding of soul. But what we need to note here is that using soul (always with the feminine pronoun) to represent "the whole person" moves the focus of personhood away

from the flesh-and-blood man or woman to something other than the bodily.[29] Given that "person" and all other equivalent expressions, such as the ones listed at the beginning of this section, are always referred to as masculine, the use of "soul" as feminine is at root unincarnational. In other words, his primary "person" word is not focussed on the masculine which, at that period, was customarily used to stand for man or woman, and he is certainly not making a feminist point in his use of "she" for the soul. Therefore, he has shifted the essence of personhood away from concrete embodiment and located it in a spiritualized "she". This move is entirely in accord with what I have called his evaluative dualism where the body is disparaged in comparison with the soul.

k) The soul as spirit

Although Baker constantly uses "soul" to mean the human person, there are many occasions when it is understood purely as something spiritual. At the beginning of *Holy Wisdom* he indirectly defines "soul" as "an immortal intellectual spirit" (3); this is supplemented later: "The soul being a pure spirit, consisting of mere activity, cannot cease doing and desiring something" (24). When he says that "we are imprisoned in mortal bodies of flesh and blood" (165),[30] the "we" presumably refers to the essential persons who are spiritual souls rather than a unity of body and soul.

Nevertheless, Baker sometimes discusses souls as things that we possess rather than things that we are: "Good Christians endeavour to save their souls" (42, cf 118); "find out what thy soul would have thee do" (88).

What seems to be the case is that Baker is operating with two fairly distinct senses of "soul": firstly, the word refers to the whole person; secondly, the word refers to the spiritual part of the person. There are

many examples of each of these two usages. In addition, there are several references where the two senses are used in the same sentence without any apparent embarrassment on Baker's part: "souls ... cannot have any assurance of the state and inclinations of their souls" (29); "if the business concern herself and her own soul's good" (91, the "her" referring to a previous mention of soul); religious souls ... fly the sight of the world ... to purify their own souls" (121); the Divine Spirit will become "the very soul of our souls" (165).[31]

There is a parallel group of references where the second sense of "soul" is replaced by "spirit": "souls are directed ... without the least benefit of their spirit" (44); a soul is encouraged "to follow the directions of her own spirit" (48f); indeed, we must "spiritualize all the faculties of the soul, causing it to become a pure spirit" (181); "she will herself advance in spirit" (412).

I have already suggested that the use of soul with the feminine pronoun for the human person displays an unincarnational tendency. The second major use with its emphasis on the spiritual and the desirability of increased spiritualization simply confirms this tendency. The shift that Baker seems to favour is not one from the spiritual to embodiment and hence complete human personhood, but *from* embodiment to increased spiritualization. His uses of soul suggest that for him the focus of personhood is not embodiment.

1) The superior soul and the inferior soul

The soul may be "a pure spirit" (24) for Baker, but he assumes various distinctions when talking about it. Where Aquinas, following Aristotle's *De Anima*, might talk of vegetative, sensitive and intellectual

souls,[32] Baker seems to view the soul as having two major "portions": He talks of the "superior and spiritual" and the "inferior and sensitive portion" (202).[33] These two "portions" are referred to in several places and ways: "the inferior grosser part of the soul" (152); "the sensual portion of the soul" (221); "the inferior soul" with its "sensitive appetite" and "imagination" in contrast to "the superior soul" (329). These "portions" are characterised by their particular faculties, the powers by which they act, faculties which have been depraved by the Fall (5, 76). Although at one point he talks of "the three faculties of our souls" (78), elsewhere he hints that there are many faculties: eg "the soul in *all* its faculties" (79). Never explicit, he implies, nevertheless, that the faculties of the superior soul include will, understanding and reason, and of the inferior soul, imagination, memory and sensitive appetite (334).[34]

Baker mentions the "superior soul" many times in the course of *Holy Wisdom*. Its main faculty seems to be the will: at one point he seems to identify the two when he talks of sinful affections to creatures residing "in the superior soul or rational will" (168). It is desirable for the superior soul to repose above events in the inferior (206, cf 203) but also it must have dominion over the inferior: "the superior soul, whose office is to bridle and restrain sense" (231, cf 170); sin impairs the "due subordination of the sensitive faculties (the imagination, memory and appetite) to the superior soul" (334); in aspirations "the dominion that the superior soul has over (the interior senses and sensitive faculties) is now become very great" (463, cf 481).

Indeed, the life of prayer should bring about a gradual emancipation of the superior soul from the sensual portion of the soul. All its operations become more spiritual (356, 378, 385f). In this context the

inferior soul is in close alliance with the body which is a prison for the superior soul (421 etc).[35]

Baker will go even further than this and in the next section I will need to consider his understanding of spirit and of the notion, found in many mystical writers, of the "summity of the spirit". Although from a slightly different angle, his distinction between superior and inferior soul serves to strengthen the argument of the present chapter. A conflict does not here reside in a simple body/soul distinction: indeed there seems to be a close kinship between what is said of the body and of the inferior soul. But the urge for emancipation from the inferior and the implication that the inferior has little or nothing of value to contribute to the spiritual life as it ought to be, lead in the direction of a dis-integration of the human person.

III THE SPIRIT

m) Spirit

We have already looked at the link between spirit and soul; in the present section we will need to consider in more detail Baker's understanding of "spirit". It would be valuable firstly, to consider the subsidiary ways in which he uses "spirit": sometimes he talks of "the humours and spirits of the body" (330, 429, 433, cf 232), material or quasi-material factors which underlie particular personalities. Occasionally, "spirits" are persons or personalities: "active spirits ... are no less harmful to a community than a lesser number of loose spirits (148, cf 52, 142); "each several disposition must be put in a way suitable to the spirit of the party" (10, cf 124, 372). He also uses the sense of "the spirit of an

institution", as in "the spirit of St Benedict's order" (121, cf 52, 133, 141). Finally, there are spiritual beings such as angels and the devil (eg 34). All these uses, however, are secondary to the central theological use.

Although there are occasions where soul is identified with spirit (eg 3, 11, 24, 39, 406), it is far more common for a distinction to be drawn between them. Nor does Baker identify the superior soul with spirit. The spirit is the part of the human being which has particular affinity for God and which is essentially distinct from the corporal. For Baker, the end of the Christian life is quite clearly that the soul should be brought to "perfect union in spirit with God" (3, 9, 20, 119, 137, 182, 307, 378 etc). But it is also clear that "the region of the spirit" is "a region exalted above nature" (19); sensible devotion may mount up to the spirit (122, 325, 328), but ultimately, Baker is more impressed by the condition where "the inferior soul seems to have no part at all in the actuations of the spirit towards God" (329).

When Baker talks about the spiritual, the adjective he most frequently uses is "pure": external mortifications are "less pure and spiritual" (9, cf 33, 121, 123, 124, 182, 320, 331, 333 etc). Indeed "the true judgment of a progress is to be made with reference principally to prayer, according to the increase in the purity and spirituality" (350). For Baker purity is the condition of being unmixed (with material or sensible concerns).

Baker's model for the human person seems to place the soul, with its superior and inferior portions, at the centre: the superior reaches to the spirit and the inferior to the body. The soul is almost invariably feminine while the spirit and the body, where pronouns are used, tend to be "it" (eg 312). This tripartite arrangement is clearly stated at one point: "Now the

peculiar virtue by which all harmful inconveniences either to the body or spirit may be avoided, is that supernatural discretion by which a soul is enabled to hold a mean" (434). (By "mean" he means a balance between excessive spiritual or corporal mortifications). But there is an evaluation built in, where the focus of personhood is shifted in the direction of the spirit: with reference to Hebrews 4:12, Baker claims that it is desirable "to spiritualize all the faculties of the soul, causing it to become a pure spirit, exalted and separated from sensible objects ... This is that division of the soul and spirit mentioned by St Paul, by which the pure spirit works as a spirit, not obscured nor infected with sensual ends and interests" (181).

Despite occasional language suggesting integration ("to draw sensitive nature upward into the spirit" (328)), conflict, or at least escape, remains the most obvious model: sensible fervour depresses the operations of the spirit (323); exercises in spirit may run contrary to bodily strength (154); "the soul ... is so elevated in spirit that she seems to be all spirit, and, as it were, separated from the body" (490). There is a constant urge towards the "spiritualizing and purification of the spirit" (295).

Spirit, for St Paul, may be a powerful symbol of the divine principle within the human person, but it does not necessarily stand in contrast to the body or the senses.[36] Baker's constant tendency is to spiritualize, with the basic presumption that being incarnate is not really a desirable condition. We now need to consider another level of his understanding of spirit, the notion of "the supreme point", and its compatibility with incarnational theology.

n) The supreme point of the spirit

The notion of the supreme point of the spirit occurs frequently in mystical writings and perhaps has neoplatonic roots.[37] Different words are used for it by various mystical authors. Where Eckhart used "spark" *(funke der seelen)*, "bottom", *(boden)* or "top" *(tolden)*, Tauler, whose work Baker knew well, preferred "ground" *(grunt*, sometimes *boden* or *dolten)*.[38] Indeed this mystical theory involved Baker in controversy; several chapters of Prichard's biography are dedicated to it.[39] The "ground" was humorously nicknamed *"fundus Thaulericus*, Thaulerus his fund"[40] or "Tauler's bottom". St Teresa and St John of the Cross used "centre".[41] Authors with whom Baker is more closely associated, such as Barbanson, Harphius and Benet Canfield, have the notion of "fine point of the soul".[42] In summing up, the *Dictionnaire* suggests that authors who emphasize contemplation prefer words associated with the basic idea of "summit"; when they place the emphasis on passivity, they prefer words associated with the idea of "ground".[43] Such a summarizing of the subject may well be open to question, but that need not concern us for the purposes of the present discussion.

When we come to *Holy Wisdom* we find that Baker uses several names: "supreme portion of the spirit" (14), "supreme point of the spirit" (15), "depth and centre of the spirit" (15, 295), "pure top of the spirit" (121, cf 415, 456, 461). He speaks of God dwelling in the purest summit of man's spirit (120) and of prayer not piercing deep enough into the spirit (132, cf 303, 332, 337, 400). He talks of "the summity of the spirit" (351) and of "the centre of the spirit beyond all her (the soul's) faculties" (485).

In all these references he does not seem to be particularly aware of any distinction between height, depth or centre, but uses the metaphors indiscriminately. This "place" is at the extreme of the "superior spirit"

(415, 443). God is most perfectly encountered "above both the understanding and will" (faculties of the superior soul), "namely, in that supreme portion of the spirit which is visible to God alone, and in which He alone can inhabit; a portion so pure, noble, and divine, that it neither hath nor can have any name proper to it, though mystics endeavour to express it by divers, calling it the summit of the mind, the fund and centre of the spirit, the essence of the soul, its virginal portion, etc" (478). The soul who has gone far in the spiritual life is able "by experience to make a division between the supreme portion of the spirit and inferior nature, yea, between the summity of the spirit and the faculties of the same; for that portion of her by which she cleaves to God seems to be another third person distinct from herself" (486).

It is not easy to comment on a supposed "portion" of the human person that "neither hath nor can have any name proper to it." Faculty language of the will or understanding can be unpacked in terms of what the human person can do and therefore might be generally understood. Even soul and spirit language may be necessary for discussing religious consciousness and the fact that the spiritual cannot be entirely reduced to the material. I have argued for an integrated understanding of the human person but even so cannot avoid some language of duality. With regard to the "fund", however, it is difficult to avoid sharing the scepticism of Baker's contemporary critics.

What Baker emphasizes about the "fund" or "summity" is the gap between it and the ordinary faculties of the person, the willing, understanding, sensing and imagining and so on. So great is the gap that this exalted "portion" "seems to be another third person distinct from herself". If the "fund", understood in this sense, is the very centre of

personhood then the unity of the incarnate person is undermined. If the "fund" is the place where the human person most perfectly meets God, then God is less perfectly met in the ordinary bodiliness, which, consequently, is less graced and less valuable. Baker's teaching on the "supreme point of the spirit" serves to strengthen the case we are building up in this chapter.

But to avoid a peremptory dismissal of the concept, we should perhaps consider it further. The "spark of the soul" is notoriously difficult to explain. Frank Tobin offers a detailed discussion of the notion as used by Eckhart.[44] He writes: "It is not without reason that there is confusion surrounding this doctrine ... inconsistencies and apparent contradictions abound."[45] He wonders at the end whether we are dealing with something philosophical or something experiential or mystical.[46] It has been suggested that the spark could be the focus of integration of the human person and thus not run counter to incarnational theology. This view is apparently taken by Julian of Norwich[47] and, more relevantly for our purposes, is hinted at in Tauler's writings: he talks of the need for "a gathering up, an inward recollection of faculties without any dispersal, for in unity lies strength ... For just as all the branches of a tree spring from one trunk, so also must all powers of the soul be gathered up within its ground."[48]

Baker's wide-ranging and apparently indiscriminate use of the various terms and his idea of the "third person" suggest that he does not exploit this potential integration. In view of Tobin's remarks we may be led to ask whether the "supreme point" is a logical postulate, necessitated by a sense of the desirability of integration and by a need to specify a locus for the action of the divine on the human; the latter important, perhaps, because the spiritual authors cannot quite accept the appropriateness of God working directly on the flesh and blood person. A second explanation is that

the stumbling talk about the "supreme point" is an attempt to articulate an "ineffable" experience which only mystics have. We might object to the cerebral nature of the first explanation and the elitism of the second. Furthermore, examination of actual mystics indicates the problematical nature of this notion of ineffability.

Even if we reject "supreme point" language and use the vaguer and less substantive "unity" (as, for example, "God operates primarily in the unity of the human person"), we are still left with the various inner conflicts, the strict hierarchy, the spiritualizing tendencies. Thus, I would suggest that the notion of the supreme point of the spirit, at least in Baker, does not enable a rapprochement with incarnational theology.

IV FACULTIES OF THE SOUL

o) The faculties of the soul

We have already noted that Baker's anthropological language includes the term "faculties" (or "powers"). Faculty psychology is at least as old as Augustine. Aquinas developed the subject;[49] his term "power" may be defined as "an inborn ability or 'faculty' to conduct a kind of operation."[50] This way of discussing the activity of the human person was taken for granted in Baker's period.[51]

Holy Wisdom is not very explicit as to what the individual faculties actually are, although it refers to the "three faculties of our souls" (78); these, it seems, are the faculties of the superior soul.[52] Certainly they include understanding and will to which Baker refers throughout *Holy Wisdom*. Memory, Augustine's third, is referred to only once, and then, with imagination and appetite, as one of "the sensitive faculties" which stand in

contrast to the superior soul (334). Baker is certainly aware of Augustine's three: in his commentary on the *Cloud of Unknowing* he writes: "Other authors express the powers of the superior soul by the names of memory, understanding, and will; but our author uses the terms understanding, reason and will;"[53] he continues: "the power which others call memory our author calls understanding, and that which others call understanding our author calls reason."[54] Elsewhere he explicitly refers to "the powers of the superior soul, viz. memory, will and understanding."[55]

Low tells us that "in Baker's published writings there is only one significant reference to memory, a quotation from the the works of Harphius."[56] I have already pointed out that Baker recognizes variation in vocabulary: while he quotes Harphius with approval, he does not necessarily adopt his usage. In *Holy Wisdom*, he refers to the mind several times (indeed, for him, real prayer is mental prayer), but the will and the understanding are the powers of the superior soul with which he constantly deals.

In this present section I shall make some general remarks about the faculties, and shall then proceed in the following sections to consider them individually.

As always, the contamination of the human race began at the fall when "miserable depravations" were caused in all the powers and faculties of the soul (5). The whole person, consequently, is "universally depraved" (207, 209). The superior and inferior souls each have their own faculties: those of the former are sometimes called "the superior rational faculties" (177) or simply "superior faculties" (184). Those of the inferior soul are called "the imaginative and discursive faculties" (14), "the sensible faculties" (87), "corporal or sensitive faculties" (280), or sometimes simply

"inferior faculties" (334).

Although grace is "a certain divine principle or faculty" and "the virtue thereof extends itself through all the faculties of the soul" (76), its work of counteracting the depravations occurs primarily in the three faculties of the superior soul, whence it spreads "throughout the whole mass" (78). The faculties form an arena for the conflict between grace and depravation but a deeper conflict is also suggested, namely, that between the inferior faculties and the superior: the inferior faculties "do strive to depress the spirit" (334); they "ofttimes do resist our superior reason" (203). The superior soul strives to subordinate the sensitive faculties (334).

At root there is a "dis-integration" of the faculties: while all the faculties may be disordered, Baker discusses the condition where the inferior are in disorder and the superior in peace and harmony (202). Admittedly, a better situation would be for the harmony to permeate all the faculties, but the conflict does not make this easy.

Finally, as we have already seen in the previous section, there is a sort of union in the summity of the spirit, "beyond all her faculties" (485) when the soul operates "without any perceptible use of her faculties" (486). But as I suggested in that section, Baker does not seem to exploit any potential this concept may have as the focus of integration.

Faculty language need not contradict incarnational theology: the human person does operate in different ways and talk of willing, understanding, imagining and so forth may be a convenient way of describing it. But to establish a conflict among these powers and to see them as operating independently of each other to such an extent seems to go against the completeness and unity of the human person.

The Human Person: Individual

In the next three sections I shall consider Baker's portrayal of the imagination (an inferior faculty), the understanding and the will (superior faculties) to see how they relate to incarnational theology.

p) The imagination

We have already seen in the previous chapter how the imagination, one of the sensitive faculties (334), is drawn into the conflict model. Here we need to consider whether Baker's assessment of it is entirely negative.

It is clear that the imagination has a part to play in the life of prayer. Baker observes that "mystic authors" have divided the spiritual life in several ways; he quotes two or three of these before presenting his own division (350f). For him the first degree is "discoursive prayer or meditation" (351); the vast majority of "souls" start in this degree and "active livers" as opposed to those called to contemplative ways might well stay there: "the exercises of the active livers are much in the imaginative and discursive faculties of the soul, so is likewise their union" (14). While their meditation "will grow more and more pure" it will "never...exclude a direct use of the imagination" (375). Active livers are constantly the prey of "vain images of distracting things" (363) so one great value of forming religious images is to counteract the worldly ones: the aim of such souls should be "to wipe out ... the vain images contracted abroad by superinducing or painting over them new and holy images" (363, cf 354). The purpose of such images is to generate affections to God (361).

But the imagination is essentially unstable (203, 236, 336, cf 310); at times it refuses to present suitable images (329); it is not easily subject to reason (248). There is a deeper problem associated with it: the distinct images it presents will need to be rejected by the soul because

they are imperfect shadows of truth (388): there is a distinctly Platonic flavour here. So the use of the imagination is a dangerous though perhaps necessary stage through which the contemplative soul must pass: the aim of the soul is to exclude all manner both of sensible and intellectual images (359); indeed contemplative prayer is better than discursive because it transcends all operations of the imagination (12). As prayer progresses it becomes increasingly emancipated from the imagination (357f, 375, 388, 403, 442). The ideal condition would be for there to be no use of the imagination at all, but that, Baker admits, is inconsistent with being in the body (458). What can be achieved is the successive "purification and spiritualizing" of images (358).

How are we to assess Baker's discussion of the role of the imagination? We have already seen that he places it in the arena of conflict. But he also sees it as having a positive function in the early stages of prayer. Nevertheless, he is far more aware of its dangers than of its strengths; it is rooted in the senses (cf 97, 121, 311)[57] and stirs up sensuality (388). Indeed, it is rooted in bodiliness: Baker urges the value of "spiritual prayer" ... "elevating his mind to God to transcend all bodies and bodily images ... Happy is the soul that when she prays empties herself entirely of all images" (313). It may well be the case that any worthwhile spiritual goal is ultimately beyond our present reach; nevertheless, the favouring of a condition, or the struggle to reach a condition that Baker acknowledges to be impossible for incarnate human beings (458, quoted above) is hardly a recommendation of his spirituality. Of course, the "revolving of images" (236) does have its negative side: the images may be unworthy or "sinful" (eg 236, 246); they may provide an escape from the world of real experience into one of make-believe; in the prayer context

"distinct and express images" (355) or "grosser images" (10, 71, 357), such as viewing God as an old man with a beard, are limited and limiting. What Baker seems to be suggesting is that in prayer we should be moving beyond the use of metaphor and model. This point of view finds support in the "abyss of unknowing" in the apophatic tradition.[58] Baker may have that tradition in mind. But, while his warnings perhaps have some value, he seems, as in other areas, to overstep the mark and to create a rather negative impression of the imagination. This impression is created both by the content of what he says and by the imagery in which he expresses it. His spiritualizing attitude to the imagination and his disparagement of its value suggests a fundamental inadequacy in his Christian anthropology.[59]

q) The understanding

Baker associates the understanding with both the imagination and the will. Thus, in some ways, it is a bridging faculty. His language and assumptions are reminiscent of Aquinas: "But the proper activity of the soul, which is to understand by means of images, cannot take place without the body. For the soul understands nothing without imagery, and there is no imagery apart from the body;"[60] again, "we cannot will anything unless given an understanding of it."[61] Baker often takes understanding with reason. These are related by Aquinas: "Reason and understanding cannot be distinct powers in man ... the relation of reasoning to understanding is that of motion to rest ... the first is of the incomplete, the second of the complete."[62]

For Baker, the understanding, unlike the imagination, is an entirely neutral faculty; it is linked with the imagination in bringing precedent motives for meditation (330); indeed, quoting St Augustine, "all good

proceeds from the understanding as its first principle" (450f). The understanding is stored with good motives (362); the understanding and not the imagination receives divine "illustration" (89f, cf 6, 86, 87). While Baker is often negative about the imagination, he is rarely so on the several occasions when he links it with the understanding. Nevertheless the imagination may hinder the understanding (311). The understanding has a natural vast capacity (3); it is "our only director" (243).

Despite this positive appreciation of the function of the understanding, the faculty will be superseded. Although understanding and will are linked together: "the understanding contemplating and admiring God ... the will adoring and obeying" (164), nevertheless, "whatsoever the understanding operates with reference to God can produce no good effect upon the soul further than it hath relation to and influence on the will" (387). It is the *paidagogos* or tutor of the will. Prayer for the contemplative will become "pure prayer of the will without any perceivable help or concurrence of the understanding" (336, cf 310, 366, 384); the will has little by little gained ground on the understanding and leaves it behind (375, 383).

I shall not comment at this point about Baker's way of dealing with the faculty of understanding, but shall go on immediately to consider the will.

r) The will

For Baker the will is the sovereign faculty, the soul's "principle faculty, and, indeed, all in all" (336). If he is to place the centre of the human personality in one of its faculties it is in the will.[63]

He draws a distinction between the "superior will", an expression he

uses many times, and "our natural carnal wills" (167). The former is a faculty of the superior soul and is "spiritual" (90, 385) and "rational" (168, 388). When Baker uses plain "will", he means the superior will, and I shall follow this usage. The will, like the other faculties, was depraved through the fall (4f), nevertheless, "it cannot be replenished with any object of goodness less than infinite" (3). Twice Baker insists that "all merit and demerit lies in the superior will, and not at all in sensuality considered in itself, and as divided from the will" (203, cf 420). The fundamental orientation towards God is found here and prayer is centred here.

Baker uses the expression "heart" several times and, as in biblical anthropology, it often means more or less the same as will: He talks of "the prayer of heart or will" (310, cf 11, 313). At other times it complements the will: for example, he speaks of a soul "tending to God and working almost only with the heart and blind affections of the will" (12).

The second degree of prayer for Baker is "the prayer of forced immediate acts or affections of the will" (351). He distinguishes acts, which "are made in and by the superior will only" from affections which "begin at the first almost wholly in inferior nature" (385). The "more sublime exercise" is the immediate act of the will (370) and the will is several times described as "a blind faculty" (364, cf 356).

Baker's teaching on prayer presupposes a definite hierarchy of faculties: in the earliest stages, the senses and imagination are used, but these must soon be superseded, having fed the understanding; the understanding in turn feeds the will which is the principal "organ" of prayer; gradually the will is emancipated from the understanding "till at last the prayer becomes entirely of the will" (383). In this condition "we

love with the whole possible extension of our wills" (451); their operations are "most purely spiritual" (456); indeed, the will is transformed: "so wholly possessed and inflamed with divine love ... that it is become like fiery burning steel, clean through shining with this fire. It is now a will deiform, and in a manner deified" (464). In this state the whole person has reached a most exalted condition (465). The highest condition of all, however, as we have seen, is the union which "passes above both the understanding and will ... in that supreme portion of the spirit" (478).

Baker's understanding of the will may go some way towards providing a point of integration of the human person. Nevertheless, our consideration of the faculties leads us in the same direction as our discussion of the body and the soul: the more spiritual something is, the more detached from ordinary bodiliness, the better it is. While union with God in will may have happy effects in the whole person, closer adherence to the truths of the Catholic faith (479), greater virtue (465) and so on, the locus of union never seems to be the whole person, but a spiritual portion. This suggests a deficiency from the perspective of incarnational theology.

s) The mind

To complete our survey of Baker's understanding of the psychological make-up of the human person, we need to glance at his use of the expression "mind". In the *Cloud of Unknowing* "mind" is the word used for the principle power of the soul.[64] According to James Walsh, "'Mind' (is) the word used to translate Augustine's *memoria*."[65] Later manuscripts of *The Cloud* altered "mind" to "memory", no doubt to bring it in line with Augustine.[66] Baker's commentary on *The Cloud* seems to be rather confused at this point and he does not mention "mind" at all.[67]

The Human Person: Individual

In *Holy Wisdom* "mind" is used rather vaguely without any obvious technical meaning. In the broadest sense it seems to be a sort of "location" where the soul's faculties of imagination and understanding act. Thus it entertains thoughts and images: he talks of "imaginations and thoughts as rest in the mind alone" (246, cf 199, 249). But it is not a passive receptacle: it is at the centre of the activity of prayer. Baker defines prayer as "an elevation of the mind to God, or more largely and expressly thus: prayer is an affectuous actuation of an intellective soul towards God" (299). Mental prayer is the only true prayer and as soon as the mind wanders the prayer ceases (313). The "mentality" of prayer is central to Baker's understanding (315).[68] For effective prayer the mind must be in a condition of patience, tranquillity and peace (23, 92, 486).

For Baker the mind is closely related to the understanding and the will. In fact in many references it seems to be equivalent to understanding. This picks up a Thomistic sense: "the principle of understanding ... is called mind or intellect."[69] Thus, like the understanding, the mind is discussed using images of enlightening: "Supernatural light illustrates man's mind" (3); "secret whispers enlighten the mind" (478, cf 328). It is the mind that contemplates God (3, 4, 333, 445, 450). At one place an identification seems to be suggested: any "employment the mind or understanding exercises" is preliminary because real prayer "is only and immediately exercised by the will" (301).

This close link with the understanding is supported by the fact that the mind is often mentioned with the will or heart: "troubles in heart and passions in mind" (44, 313); in prayer "the mind and superior will are wholly abstracted and elevated above nature" (166, cf 168); "a ... reposeful operation of the mind ... with the whole bent of the will" (450, cf 289,

336). Indeed, Baker's frequent use of the expression "well-minded souls" (eg 107, 146, 179, 184, 203, 216, 251, 264, 383 etc) which seems to mean "of good *will*" - (he occasionally uses "well-willed", eg 23) - suggests that there may be an even closer link between the functions of mind and of will.

In fact the mind is sometimes treated as a faculty: the quotation above (450) refers to its "operation" and elsewhere Baker talks of "the disposition of the spiritual soul (that is, the judgment of the mind and resolution of the will" (293). He tells us "God ... is alone exposed to all the faculties of the soul, to be contemplated by the mind, embraced by the will ..." (445).

Finally, it should be noted that for Baker, the mind stands in contrast, if not opposition, to the body. He talks of "the indispositions ... either of our complexions or minds" (197). The complexion is, of course, the individual's character based on the combination of bodily humours. "Motions in the body" may influence the operation of the mind (249) but each may go its own way: even when the body is exhausted "the mind or will should never be weary or backward, but remain ever invincible, forcing inferior nature to comply" (289). This, of course, is not to deny that we can be mentally tired.

Our consideration of Baker's use of mind has been necessary to complete our picture of his understanding of the psychological make-up of the human person. We have already noted that he is not particularly rigorous in his terminology and his assumptions about the mind do not generate any new contribution to the argument of this chapter. We should simply note that his emphasis on the mental and the "mentality" of prayer is at the expense of bodiliness and of the whole person. Thus our discussion in this section serves to strengthen the general progress of the argument.

t) General summary and conclusion

The various strands of my argument will be drawn together in the concluding chapter. In the present context I will simply offer some remarks arising from this discussion of Baker's theory of the human person as an individual. We must remember from the start that he does not have an original or a systematic philosophy of the human person. Much of what he thinks must be read between the lines or from the language and imagery he employs. It is clear that he makes his assumptions and draws his terminology from the theological and spiritual context in which he lives. While he remains an individual and while he brings his personality and experience to bear on a range of spiritual language and influences that he shares with others, he is nevertheless a reorderer, clarifier and passer-on, rather than an innovator. This is not to deny the freshness and challenge of some of his emphases;[70] nevertheless, as I argued in chapter 2, a critique of Baker is a critique of more than Baker.

In the present chapter I considered the way Baker fits the body into his anthropological scheme. Despite practical suggestions about mortification which are moderate in tone, his prevailing understanding is characterized by a sense of the inferiority of the body. Sometimes his comments are overtly negative, as in his references to the body as a prison; at other times it is the tone of his language that suggests a disparaging attitude. Beneath all this is the ideal of angelism. Such a view clearly conflicts with the value which incarnational theology places on embodiment.

Baker's discussion of the soul is more complex. A crudely understood body/soul distinction is not really at the centre of his thought at all: the distinctions he draws are much more subtle. He sees the person as having a higher and a lower part and these terms are used evaluatively as well as

descriptively. The body tends to be associated with the lower, the soul straddles the two and the spirit and its summity are in the higher. The powers of the soul are scattered across the higher and the lower. This hierarchy inevitably places more value on the higher with an underlying disparagement of the lower, a disparagement that sometimes becomes overt hostility.

For Baker real personhood is centred in the spiritual, away from the incarnate state of psycho-somatic unity, and it is there that God is encountered. Hence there is the constant drive away from experience in the bodily. The aim is emancipation from the body and the inferior soul by way of a gradual spiritualization. The greatest value is placed on the spirit and value is inversely proportional to bodiliness.

This summary is sketchy and lacks the more nuanced approach of the various sections of the chapter. In those sections I indicated the several ways in which Baker's view conflicts with incarnational theology. His concept of the human person is at variance with the principles established in chapter 3, primarily for the following reasons: firstly, his evaluative dualism of the spiritual and the bodily; secondly, his location of personhood away from embodiment; thirdly, the consequent lack of an integrated understanding of the human person; and finally, the spiritualizing impetus towards a largely though not exclusively covert angelism.

These factors suggest that Baker's theory of the individual does not really accord with the requirements of incarnational theology. In the following chapter we shall consider the human person as a social being and see how far Baker's assumptions are in agreement with the social implications of the incarnational theology developed in chapter 3.

Title page of Baker MS *De Conversione Morum*
(copied 1694, Douai Abbey library)

CHAPTER 6

"THE COMMON LIFE OF GOOD CHRISTIANS"': THE HUMAN PERSON: SOCIAL

a) Introduction

Chapter 5 dealt with the human person as an individual and showed that Augustine Baker's anthropology runs into problems when measured against incarnational theology. Although Baker is primarily interested in the spiritual life of the individual soul rather than in the communal life of Christians, he tacitly acknowledges that, to a greater or lesser degree, the former takes place in a social context. That the Christian life is social is an uncontrovertible fact, strongly re-emphasized by the second Vatican Council. Collectively, we form the body of Christ, St Paul tells us, and throughout the New Testament there is emphasis on the social obligations and unity of Christians. Thus arose the related doctrines of the church and sacraments, the theory and practice of communal prayer and liturgy, and the religious life.

Baker's teaching is directed essentially to women and men, perhaps more to the former, who live in monastic communities. While he may be taking a lot for granted with regard to the social dimension of life, he has a certain amount to say about it, albeit often in passing. Modern members of Baker's English Benedictine Congregation will always be interested in the way he deals with the divine office and the common life.

I have already mentioned, in chapter 2, the fact that those who have discussed Baker, from his own day to the present, have felt the need to single out and defend his approach to the social dimension of the Christian

life. As I showed there, their conclusions, to a greater or lesser extent, are in Baker's favour: he does not stray into what Catholic critics would consider to be unorthodox. My own conclusions will be less favourable.

In the present chapter I shall consider his position on a number of issues: the church, the sacraments and the liturgy, the divine office and the communal life. I shall also consider the way he views various relationships: with Christ, with the superior, with the spiritual director. Then I shall look at his understanding of friendship and of women before concluding with a glance at the themes of the golden age and the goal of the human person. My conclusion will be that his teaching is too much focussed on the individual: not only is human personhood over-spiritualized, as I showed in the previous chapter, but it is also insufficiently anchored in its present context of social relationships, activities and responsibilities.

Social relationships presuppose bodiliness; it is reasonable to believe that Baker's limited emphasis on the social dimension is related to his spiritualizing tendency. The inadequacies which I will identify in the course of the present chapter point back to and confirm the deficiencies discussed in chapter 5.

I CHURCH AND SACRAMENTS

b) The Church

When Baker talks about the Church, he invariably means the Roman Catholic Church; this position is entirely in accordance with the Roman ecclesiology which would culminate in the definitions of the first Vatican Council. Indeed, it would be surprising if Baker, a convert to Rome in the

Reformation period, were to hold any other view. He mentions the Church twenty odd times in the course of *Holy Wisdom* and a fairly consistent picture emerges.

> The religious life about which he is concerned is seen as firmly located within the Church: this form of life is "the most happy, quiet and secure ... of any in God's Church" (114). The spiritual life of contemplatives, however remote from the concerns of ordinary Christians, must always conform carefully to what the Church ordains (133). Indeed, instruction in the fundamental doctrines of the Catholic faith is a *sine qua non* for progress in prayer (cf 13, 63, cf 32). Baker assures us that one of the results of passive union is "a most firm clear assurance and experimental perception of those verities of Catholic religion which are the objects of our faith" (479). In talking of "supernatural passive union", he says that even Catholics, if they be inexperienced in internal ways, will find it difficult to understand, but that "out of the Catholic Church no such graces and communications were ever heard of" (481).

If contemplative prayer is rooted in the Catholic faith, it, in turn, brings blessings on the Church (140, 296). But this benefit is spiritual: nevertheless, Baker acknowledges that monks were, in the past, drawn from their manual labour and prayer to answer the Church's missionary and pastoral needs, and that this was God's will (138). He includes a chapter (I, 3, 10) "Of the apostolical mission into England", but such missionary activity is certainly not something to seek out. Rather, he quotes favourably St Anthony who discouraged his monks from frequenting crowded churches and from bringing non-monks into their chapels, and St Stephen of Grammont who forbade his religious to have public churches or to join confraternities. Clearly, Baker has reservations about participating in

ordinary Church life.

For Baker there is no speculation about the nature of the Church: admittedly, he does not set himself this task. Rather, a model of the Church is taken for granted and this model is an institutional one. As Baker's contemporary, Cardinal Robert Bellarmine affirmed, the Church is a society "as visible and palpable as the community of the Roman people, or the Kingdom of France, or the Republic of Venice."[2] This institution carries a juridical and theological authority to which Baker bows without question. Only once does he see the Church in a different light, as a healer: "if ... thou stumble and perhaps fall down, and get some harm thereby ... get up again and return into the right way, using such remedies for thy hurt as the Church ordains" (37), but here the context is the parable of the pilgrim, a long quotation from Walter Hilton.[3] Baker does not dwell on New Testament models: his ecclesiology is essentially the standard Roman ecclesiology of his contemporaries.

c) The sacraments

I have already considered, in chapter 3, the place of the sacraments in incarnational theology. They show the principle of the incarnation by embodying divine power in material form and human action. As Christ himself is the "sacrament of encounter with God,"[4] so the church, his body, is the sacrament of Christ; this body acts through the celebration of the individual sacraments. As expressions of the church, they are essentially social in nature.

During the middle ages, the belief in seven sacraments became general; it was affirmed in 1439 at the Council of Florence[5] and again at Trent.[6] In *Holy Wisdom* only four of the seven sacraments are mentioned,

namely, and in order of frequency, confession, the eucharist, orders and baptism.

Baker accepts that through the sacraments the Holy Spirit is communicated to us (6) and that they renew grace removed by sin (7). An ordinary Christian life will involve reception of the sacraments and this principle is taken for granted by Baker. Nevertheless, he is neutral rather than enthusiastic about them and when he does discuss them, he is more concerned to state dangers than positive effects. I will consider this point in more detail at the end of the present section.

Baker's attitude is summed up in a paragraph in which he explicitly states the Tridentine position and gives full references: firstly, the sacraments do convey grace *ex opere operato;* secondly, they do so at all times and to all persons that duly receive them; but thirdly, "the quantity and measure of the said grace is ... said to be ... according to the peculiar disposition and co-operation of each person respectively." The correct disposition is brought about by the practice of internal prayer (294, cf 256).

Excessive reception can produce irreverence (150); tepid reception can merely increase hardness of heart (151). In fact, people do not enter monasteries for "the use of the sacraments; nor for hearing of sermons" (119) because these things can be done just as well outside. The end of the religious life is "not to enjoy the sacraments" (257). We shall see in a later section that Baker constantly praises the golden age of the past when the religious fervour was so much greater than in the present, and this in spite of the fact that there is "far greater frequentation of sacraments in these days above the ancient times" (139). Indeed, "it is not ... the external practice of virtues, nor much less customary frequent confessions,

communions ... but pure spiritual prayer ... that must ... bring a soul to a state of perfect freedom" (182).

Now it may be argued that Baker takes the sacramental system and its positive effects for granted. He does not overtly deny the importance of the sacraments as an essential part of the Christian life. Indeed, he specifically disowns the Euchitae (another name for the Messalians) who "condemned all other things besides prayer, despising the sacraments" (315). At the period in which he wrote the sacraments may have been viewed in a somewhat mechanical way rather than as rich community celebrations of the incarnate power of God. Baker's remarks suggest an impatience with the mechanical approach: indeed, Justin McCann sees Baker's teaching as being opposed to "the dominant spirituality of the Counter-Reformation ... which ... required very frequent confessions and the regular services of a professional 'director'."[7] It is true that sacraments can easily become nothing more than external actions. They can be received merely from "an impulse of nature and its satisfaction." In this they differ from internal affective prayer which alone "cannot possibly want purity of intention" (312).

On the other hand, while Baker's fears about the mechanical approach may generate a valid critique of the sacramental practice of his time, do they in fact go further than this? Do they point not so much towards a more incarnational approach as towards an emphasis on spiritual prayer at the expense of sacraments? In a work on the spiritual life the length of *Holy Wisdom*, the sacraments are remarkably peripheral. Of course he takes them for granted: a Catholic Christian could not do otherwise. But to argue that he presumes a positive understanding of them is to argue from silence.

In fact, Baker's comments seem to suggest a coolness on his part with

regard to the effectiveness of the sacraments in the spiritual life. What he actually says about them, taken with the paucity of counter-balancing positive statements, goes further than merely pointing out the dangers of externalism. Other, generally favourable, readers of Baker have noticed this difficulty.[6]

It would be wrong to condemn the sacramental theology of another age from the perspective of modern concerns. Nevertheless, we are investigating *Holy Wisdom* as it stands as a work helpful for men and women of today and not simply as an historical document. While accepting the value of Baker's attack on the mechanical use of sacraments, we may discern beneath this the spiritualizing tendency we have already identified in the previous chapter. Baker's emphasis does favour the inner and the spiritual at the expense of the physical and bodily. His references to sacraments do not stand up well in the light of incarnational theology.

In the following two sections I shall consider in more detail what Baker has to say about the four sacraments with which he deals.

d) Baptism, orders and the eucharist

The decision to consider these three sacraments together is not a theological one, but nor is it arbitrary. It is because Baker's comments on them are so brief.

He refers to baptism only twice, in the chapter entitled "How God communicates internal light" (I, 2, 6). We have seen in chapter 4 the prominent role played by the Holy Spirit in the spiritual conflict; according to Baker "that fundamental grace, which in Scripture is called *donum Spiritus Sancti* (the gift of the Holy Ghost) ... is conferred on all in baptism" (76). He describes this "fundamental grace" later as "that talent

or stock that has God's image on it, and not Caesar's, which God bestows on everyone in baptism ... to trade withal, which ... being well managed, multiplies into many talents" (78). This is an unexpectedly rich idea, hinting at both the baptismal seal and the notion of baptism as a process of growth rather than merely a moment of grace. But this is all that *Holy Wisdom* has to say on baptism.

In his several references to orders, Baker accepts an hierarchical understanding: the order of priests is the one "to which all other inferior orders do tend" (107). The sacrament of orders does not give the priest the ability to be a spiritual director, but, if a proper director cannot be found, an ignorant confessor will have some value "for even by such men doth the Holy Ghost speak by reason of their office" (51).

Nevertheless, the desire for orders is not relevant to Baker's interests: the primitive monks, always admired models, were not concerned "for the getting of learning or for the disposing themselves to holy orders" (137). In his chapter "Of the apostolical mission into England" (I, 3, 10) he speaks admiringly of St Augustine and his companions, "our first holy converters of England" who undertook their labour only when "an absolute command was imposed on them by the Supreme Pastor" and even "when they were consecrated and exalted to the episcopal function, yet still they retained both the exercises and fashions of monastical contemplative persons" (158). This, of course, was very much in tune with the feelings of Pope Gregory.[9]

Baker urges those who aspire to "so formidable an office" as that of priest to spend themselves in contemplative prayer, because their pastoral success depends on it (107f). Indeed, and here he quotes Cardinal Bellarmine, there are some who "do often (if not daily) celebrate the most

holy Sacrifice" and yet are "so void of all devotion ... so cold of Divine love" (309).

It is clear that Baker values holy orders and appreciates their necessity in the church. But in *Holy Wisdom* they are not relevant to his spiritual teaching. Admittedly, much of what he says was aimed at women religious in a period when the ordination of women was unthinkable. Nevertheless, there is no sense whatsoever of a uniquely priestly spirituality. If anything, the priesthood might be a distraction from the real work of the God-seeker: Baker tells the story of St Florentius, bishop of Utrecht and then of Münster, who had to justify his desire to pray (109). There is no sense of a mystical conformity to Christ through priesthood, but there is also little sense of priesthood being an embodiment of service. The spirituality of *Holy Wisdom* is a lay spirituality.

The Council of Trent re-emphasized the central dignity of the "tremendous and most holy sacrament of the Eucharist."[10] As Baker would have known, it was for the mass, among other things, that Catholics in Britain were going to the stake.

Once again, Baker's overt interest in this sacrament is slight. The grace accorded in baptism is "cherished or increased by the worthy use of the holy Eucharist" (76), but "tepid communions" harden the heart (150, cf 151). He offers sound advice, however, on the over-scrupulous avoiding of communion (261, cf 264).

There is a duty of communicating (251) but frequent communions are not a principle means of perfection (182), indeed they have small effect without prayer (263).

Baker shows a standard Catholic reverence towards the sacrament of the altar. It is taken for granted that people will communicate, but he is

once again particularly sensitive to the dangers of externalism. The eucharist, for any particular communicant, could become an empty gesture: interior prayer could not. Thus interior prayer is the essential means of spiritual progress.

e) Confession

During Baker's period official Church statements on the sacrament of penance or confession had dwelt almost entirely on the forgiveness of sins and the various pre-conditions attached to this. The fourth Lateran Council, however, had used the image of healing: "A priest should be prudent and cautious; like a skilled doctor, pouring wine and oil onto the wounds, he should diligently search out the circumstances of the sinner and of the sin ... so as to profer counsel and apply remedies for the healing of the sick person."[11] "To profer counsel": it is this aspect of the sacrament that we might expect to be of particular interest to Baker, because it seems to have a direct impact on spiritual progress.

The relationship and possible conflict between the spiritual director and the confessor was something of which he was painfully aware: when he was sent to Cambrai as an unofficial spiritual director to the nuns, he found that his teaching conflicted with what was being offered by the official confessor, Fr Francis Hull.[12] In a later section we will consider the relationship between the "internal liver" and his or her spiritual director. For the moment we need to investigate how Baker understands confession, the sacrament about which he has the most to say, and the role of the confessor.

Baker's first remarks about this sacrament occur in the course of Hilton's parable of the pilgrim which Baker quotes in its entirety. Before

starting on the spiritual journey, "purge (your sins) away by hearty penance and absolution" (32). As with communion, the purpose of penance is to renew the grace of the Holy Spirit given in baptism (76) and its reception is a duty (251). "The Sacrament of Penance and Confession is a holy ordinance indeed, instituted by our Lord, not for the torment but ease of consciences" (257). There should be liberty in the use of the sacrament (373) and if it proves profitable it may be used frequently (263).

The role of the confessor is simply "to hear faults confessed, to give absolution, and there an end" (47). A director needs greater wisdom, although, as we have seen, in the absence of a director, a simple confessor might do (51). Elsewhere the advice of a "confessarius" is paralleled with that of a spiritual guide (185) and wise confessors may well be able to exercise the sort of prudence required of a spiritual director (cf 256).

Beyond these few points, Baker's main concern is with the dangers associated with confession. He dedicates a whole chapter to "scruples concerning confession" (II, 2, 11). This theme is picked up elsewhere (eg 35, 56, 73, 245f). He is concerned that confession should bring peace of mind rather than anxiety: if it is a source of anxiety, then it is best used as little as possible.

As with the eucharist, he is aware that this sacrament may be used in a purely external way (172). The caveats are so insistent that the underlying impression is that this sacrament does not provide a real and constant impetus to spiritual progress. As with communions, "customary frequent confessions" are inferior to "pure spiritual prayer" in bringing the soul to perfection (182, cf 262); he quotes Bellarmine again on the problems of confession without devotion and love (309, cf 416).

f) Conclusion on the sacraments

We are now in a position to draw some tentative conclusions on Baker's sacramentology. A consideration of his understanding of the individual sacraments supports the general discussion of section c). Nevertheless, in his favour I would reiterate three points. Firstly, he is not anti-sacramental, but accepts the basic sacramental theology of the Church. The sacraments are essential to the Christian life and their reception, in accordance with the tradition of the Church, is assumed as a basis for the spiritual life. Secondly, his criticisms are largely directed against externalism or mechanicalism. Thirdly, his main concerns are with prayer and mortification, not with the sacraments.

Having acknowledged these points, however, we must delve deeper and attempt to discern his underlying attitude. What overall impression do his scattered remarks on the sacraments create in the mind of his readers? I am aware that such an apparently intuitive procedure requires great caution. What I would suggest is that Baker's central worry about the dangers of externalism and his frequent hints at the internal/external distinction, which prevent his being unequivocally enthusiastic about the potential of the sacraments, allied to his constant emphasis on internal prayer, relate to the dualistic attitude that we have discussed in previous chapters. One feels that he does not give enough importance to the role sacraments might be expected to play in an incarnational theology of the spiritual life.

I have already quoted Justin McCann's comment on Baker's dissatisfaction with a spirituality requiring "very frequent confessions".[13] This was a spirituality akin to that recommended by, for example, Baker's contemporary, "the holy Bishop of Geneva" (51) in his *Introduction to the Devout Life*.[14] This book was, of course, written for people outside the

cloister. Francis de Sales' more advanced work *Treatise on the Love of God,* makes far less explicit reference to the reception of the sacraments. Nevertheless, as one editor says, the later presupposes the earlier work and "though he only introduces the Sacraments incidentally, he does not fail to speak of them frequently, and with ... magnificent praises ... as when he says (ii, 22) that the communication of Christ's body and blood is the very consummation of the charity he is writing of, and the crown of God's love-dealings with us."[15]

It is interesting also to notice a contrast between *Holy Wisdom* and *a* similar work, *Institutio Spiritualis* by Ludovicus Blosius (1506-1566).[16] Baker makes several favourable references to his fellow Benedictine Blosius and shows many similarities of general attitude and teaching. Nevertheless, he nowhere matches the warmth with which Blosius speaks of the eucharist: "The servant of God should be anxious to receive the venerable sacrament of the Lord's Body. For by the humble, frequent, and devout reception of the Eucharist he will progress more steadily in divine union and holiness of life than by any other exercise."[17] This might suggest on Baker's part a coolness towards sacraments which contrasts with the attitude of some writers of his own period.

g) The divine office

Whatever the origins of the divine office as a formal corporate prayer for the sanctification of the hours of the day, it has always been a central feature of Benedictine monasticism and St Benedict legislated extensively for its practice.[18] As a Benedictine Baker might be expected to include some consideration of this central feature of the spiritual life of a monastic community.

Baker speaks about the office well over twenty times in the course of *Holy Wisdom* and a fairly consistent attitude towards it emerges. This attitude is similar to that towards the sacraments, but, if anything, he shows an even greater awareness of the dangers of externalism.

His first reference talks of the problem of "actions and ways which outwardly make a fair show, as solemn performances of divine offices ..." Souls should perform these duties carefully, but perfection is to be found in "exercises of the spirit" (25). Without "the virtue of spiritual discretion ... performing of solemn offices (etc) ... are so far from being of any worth that they do rather prejudice and diminish that virtue" (80, cf 150). Indeed, the spirit of St Benedict's order and rule does not consist in a "public, orderly, protracted, solemn singing of the Divine Office" (121).

He dismisses the objection that interior prayer distracts from "long solemn offices laboriously celebrated" (133); if anything, the choir might be a distraction from interior prayer (155). Baker is aware of a possible conflict between communal prayer and private prayer, and it is quite clear where his preference lies: he tells a story from St Gregory, which is worth quoting at some length, "of one of his monks whom the devil in the shape of a blackamore, tempted out of the community in the time of such recollections. By which may be perceived the great fruit and efficacy of such prayer; for the devil could be contented he should be present at the office, because during that exercise he could more easily distract his mind; but knowing the force of internal prayer ... his principle aim was to withdraw him from so profitable an exercise" (124).

Baker acknowledges certain ascetical values attached to the office: for instance, the performance of the night office stops the sensuality of sleep (235f) and frequenting the choir helps against evil thoughts (248).

Nevertheless, the office in itself is limited in its spiritual effects: it is limited in its power to produce contemplative recollection (303); unlike real internal prayer, it can be recited "lying in our sins" (300).

In view of what I have said so far, it is hardly surprising to find a chapter entitled "Of scruples concerning external duties" (II, 2, 10) which deals primarily with the office and which adopts a fairly easy-going attitude towards the duty of office-recitation.

Nevertheless, Baker provides some interesting comments on how the office might be used to help internal prayer. He feels that there needs to be an attention of mind fixed on God. The psalms present an ever-varying succession of different emotions and affections, thus drawing the mind from its fixed point. To follow these differing emotions is to practise "the lowest and most imperfect degree of attention". A second and higher degree is where a person either brings to the office, or develops during the office, "an efficacious affection to God" to which that person adheres regardless of "the sense of the present passage which they pronounce". The "third and most sublime degree" is where the person has achieved such a profound union with God that "they can attend also to the sense and spirit of each passage that they pronounce" and find their union increased thereby (305f). These are positive and creative suggestions about the integration of personal and public prayer. Baker acknowledges that the office can be said aspiratively (462), but its use in this way depends on the prior practice of internal prayer (306). It can never be enough to content oneself with the office (309, 320) which is ultimately a means and not an end (348). Nevertheless, vocal prayer in public which is "by the laws of the Church of obligation" must not be neglected or disparaged. It is in the context of this remark that he makes his single reference to the office as something

of value for the broader community (304).

Despite the occasional remark suggesting that the office can be valuable in itself, the predominant tone is slightly impatient and disparaging. The overall impression is that the office is at best neutral. He assesses it purely as a means of sanctification of the individual and is very sensitive to the dangers of externalism. There is little or no sense of the signs and gestures of the liturgy of the office being in themselves acts of prayer of the incarnate person.

Of course, his concern with externalism is a valid one. Vocal public prayer can be merely a form of words and gestures that fails to engage the complete commitment of the person. His comments could be taken as the starting point for a theory of integration in prayer. But he does not really move in this direction. One is left with a sense that bodily and vocal prayer are not as important as interior prayer and the reason lies in the spiritual/bodily dualism and the in-built evaluation which, we have seen, underlie his approach to the contemplative life.

II RELATIONSHIPS

h) Introduction

In the following five sections of the present chapter I will consider the way in which Baker deals with some relationships in which the Christian is involved. I am taking it for granted that human personhood is bound up with the pattern of relationships in which the person engages. It is through a person's bodiliness that he or she relates to others and to the world. Indeed, it might be said that communication is one of the main functions of bodiliness. I have suggested that Baker shifts the focus of personhood away

from the bodily towards the spiritual; thus a consideration of the place of relationships in the Christian's progress in the spiritual life will throw further light on his understanding of personhood. Although Baker has the "interior liver" in mind, he is explicitly writing for the Christian would-be contemplative living in community. Thus, a lot is said in *Holy Wisdom* about relationships.

i) The relationship with Christ: example and meditation

I am not assessing merely Baker's anthropology but his *Christian* anthropology. Thus it is necessary to look more closely at his understanding of the position of Christ in the life of the contemplative Christian. I have already considered the experience of Christ in the context of his body the church, through sacrament and liturgy. Here I will survey Baker's understanding of Christ in a more direct sense.

I indicated in chapter 4 that the Holy Spirit is referred to more often than Christ. Nevertheless, although *Holy Wisdom* cannot be said to be a work of Christocentric spirituality, - it focusses far more extensively on God - Christ is spoken of many times and with an attitude of warm devotion. But there is rarely, if ever, any sense of intimate union with Christ in, say, the Pauline sense as identified by writers such as Wikenhauser.[19] In the present section I shall consider two areas: Christ as exemplar and Christ as the object of meditation. In section j) I shall look at the personality of Christ and union with Christ.

The most common way in which Christ is seen is as an example or a teacher. Several times Baker refers to "a most perfect example ... given by our Saviour" (169, cf 108f, 228f, 241, 346, 427, 488f etc). As a teacher, Christ is quoted as an authority to back Baker's own spiritual emphasis: the

precept of our Lord urges constant prayer (314ff); he favours contemplative prayer (12, 16, 403); he supports "impudent" persistence in prayer (324).

Secondly, the events of Christ's life provide objects for meditation. It is interesting that Baker makes very little reference to the reading of scripture in monastic *lectio divina.* The desert fathers did some, he tells us, particularly of the psalter (136); meditating on the Holy Scriptures is a valuable spiritual exercise among others (196, cf 424, 480), but its value is limited unless accompanied by inner prayer (309); Fr Alvarez, a hero figure for Baker, spent time pondering the scriptures (342). These few references constitute all he has to say about it. Nevertheless, Baker frequently alludes to or quotes scripture and his comments on meditating on the life of Christ presuppose a sound knowledge of the gospels.

Consideration of the sufferings of Christ provides a higher motivation for the soul than does fear of hell (354). Meditating on the "blessed Humanity of our Lord" (354) or on some mystery of his life or passion helps to generate affections (367f, 370, 386f, cf 441). Indeed, one value of the great desolation is that it gives a deeper insight into our Lord's desertion, and produces "a most inflamed love to Him" (486).

Despite this positive assessment of such meditation, a spiritualizing tendency creeps in that turns on the inferiority of the imagination and understanding to the will. Baker discusses "the position of many spiritual authors, and particularly of F. Benet Canfield" that exercises of the understanding must be left behind in favour of those of the will, except for the case of the Passion of our Lord. He sums up their reasoning: "What an ingratitude it would be to God, say they, and what a neglect of our soul's good, purposely to forbear a frequent meditation of this mystery, the ground of all our happiness, the root of all merit, the supremest testimony

of divine love towards us ..." (376). Baker refers to Fr Canfield several times[20] and all favourably; only on this issue does he disagree (cf 465). For him, even meditation on the Passion must be surpassed; in fact, internal prayer of the will accords more perfectly with the spirit of the Passion than does simply meditating on it (377). In support of his position Baker refers to *The Cloud* and Barbanson (465). The "some others" (465) who, with Canfield, take a pro-Passion line, include the favoured authority Blosius. For Blosius *le souvenir de la Passion ... est celui qui doit toujours accompagner l'homme de prière et qui suffit par lui-même à nourrir sa vie spirituelle.*[21]

But there is another factor here: while acknowledging that for the perfect a reflection on the humanity of Christ can drive the soul more deeply into the divinity (378) and that all our good actions derive from the merits of the Passion (379), Baker believes that "introversions and addresses to the pure Divinity" are better than "acts or affections to the Humanity of our Lord" (394). This position is clearly rooted in his spiritualizing tendency.

The consideration of the place of the Passion raises a question as to how apophaticism fits into Baker's teaching. We ought to consider here whether his discussion presupposes a well-considered negative theology, which might be suggested by his references to the *Cloud of Unknowing*. Underlying this is a deeper question as to the relationship between incarnational and apophatic theology. There is not space in this thesis to explore the issue in any detail. The central figure behind the apophatic/cataphatic (negative/affirmative) way of looking at theology is Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite. His influence on both eastern and western traditions has been immense[22] although there is much evidence of

apophaticism earlier in the tradition.[23] At the root of apophaticism is a sense of the fundamental unknowability of the transcendent God. Cataphatic theology, on the other hand, is concerned with what we can affirm about God. It might be supposed that for a religion based on the incarnation, a real presence of the divine in the human, the cataphatic should have a prominent place. In fact the two theologies are brought together by Aquinas who, in the words of Lossky, "reduces the two ways of Dionysius to one, making negative theology a corrective to affirmative theology."[24] How Aquinas does this need not concern us here. In the words of Andrew Louth, negative and affirmative theologies "are two sides of the same coin."[25] For George Maloney, the author of the *Cloud* appreciates the importance of the cataphatic approach, while accepting that it is imperfect and must be complemented by the apophatic.[26] But it might be argued that Louth and Maloney are over-emphasizing the affirmative element in the spiritual writers with whom they deal *because* they realize that the negative does not entirely square with the implications of incarnation. The priority of the apophatic is a noticeable feature of many spiritual writers and a feature that Baker shares.

Holy Wisdom does not offer a systematic theological approach, so it is difficult to specify just how far Baker was aware of the apophatic/cataphatic relationship. He certainly has a strong apophatic dimension, linked to an insufficiently positive appreciation of the importance of the incarnate Christ. This fits comfortably with his spiritualizing anthropology but runs into conflict with incarnational theology.

Apophaticism itself, unless adequately balanced, does not accord with the requirements of incarnational theology which argues that God is really

known in Christ. Thus I would argue that a strong apophatic emphasis, if present in Baker, does not, in itself, justify his surpassing of Christocentric meditation. But I would freely admit that my comments on apophaticism are by no means exhaustive.

j) The relationship with Christ: personality and union

On the rare occasions when Baker risks discussing the personality of Christ he adopts a high Christology that detracts from the human qualities. "Our blessed Saviour ... by virtue of the hypostatical union ... was replenished with all manner of graces without measure." The only reason for his years of solitude and times of prayer was to give us an example; "He utterly refused to meddle in secular affairs" (108f). On top of this Christ "as Man" had "a most perfect knowledge, perception, and feeling of the nothingness of creatures, and the absolute totality of God ... remaining continually plunged in the abyss of His own nothing ...;" nevertheless, "without offending truth He could not believe any other creature to be more holy and perfect than Himself" (275). Such statements give little or no sense of ordinary human development.

Theories as to what Jesus knew about himself are notoriously questionable. I suppose that Baker has as much right to speculate as anyone else does. I wish only to point out that the image of Christ that emerges is of someone who is not quite human, someone, almost, who is acting out the part of a man rather than actually being one. To the extent that this is true, Baker's understanding of the incarnation is inadequate.

Finally, we need to consider the few occasions when Baker refers to a union with Christ closer than by imitation or meditation. He refers to a soul having reached the high degree where it is "Christ and His Holy Spirit

that lives, reigns and operates in her" (357); he speaks of the martyrs who have "the love of Christ burning in their hearts and constraining them" (77); he tells us that the love of Christ will not permit us to exercise enmity (227). But the only time that Christ becomes an end is in the parable of a pilgrim which Baker quotes from Hilton (31-38):[27] the style of this parable with its strong emphasis on the love of Jesus and its warm refrain "I desire nought but Jesus" contrasts noticeably with the style of the rest of *Holy Wisdom*. In this respect, *Holy Wisdom* is indeed at variance with an important strand in medieval piety, although its basic approach to the spiritual life agrees with that of Hilton.[28]

There can be no doubt about Baker's devotion to the person of Christ to whom he refers predominantly as "our Lord" or "our Saviour". But his understanding of Christ accords with the spiritualizing tendency we have already identified and is not entirely in line with incarnational theology.

k) The religious in community

Baker's primary concern is with the sanctification of the individual: "It is not for edification of others that a monastical state was instituted or ought to be undertaken." The aim should be "to purify their own souls, not to give example or instruction to others" (121). He quotes with approval an ancient hermit called Jacob: "I came not to this solitude to benefit other men's souls, but to purify mine own by prayer" (339).

The outcome of this, in a practical sense, is that the individual religious should be reluctant to take on responsibilities or commitments without or within the community: "true internal livers" are not "forward to usurp offices abroad not belonging to them, as of preaching, hearing confessions ..." (133). As regards offices within the community, "it is a

wilful thrusting one's self into dangerous distractions and temptations for any one voluntarily to desire or seek such employments" (409). Such a person should "fly honours, offices, care over others and the like" (44). Should a superior wish to impose a responsibility on a subject, however, the latter "may represent unto him his just grounds of fear lest such an employment should prove notably prejudicial to his soul" (409). Nevertheless, such offices are necessary and if the superior insists, the subject must make the best of it. Baker dedicates a chapter to "How prayer is to be exercised in distractive offices" (III, 3, 4).

The avoidance of offices is one thing, but the dissuasion extends further: things that "divine calls" urge us to avoid include "unnecessary though permitted conversations and correspondences with others, either by speaking or writing" and "encumbering or ensnaring ourselves by any voluntary assumed tasks, obligations etc, though in matters in themselves good" (44). With the main concern "the adorning of his own soul" (226), we can see here a community member who might prove very trying to his or her fellow religious. Baker places various restrictions on ordinary community life; for instance, conversations must be in common, not in twos and threes (192); religious must not speak purely to edify others and must discuss only indifferent subjects" (199).

On the other hand, Baker's comments on community life are not all so negative: he condemns the tepidity through which religious may act in a legally correct way while performing "their external necessary obligations to God and their brethren sleepily and heartlessly, without any true affection" (27). He is even willing to admit a tiny measure of passion: "just reason and necessary good of others shall require that some things be done with eagerness" (which he views as a passion), but it must be used

discreetly and "not thereby prejudice their own internal quiet of mind" (178f). He lists ten benefits of mortification, one of which is that "it is of great edification to our brethren and neighbours" (176f); however, this is the ninth of the ten, and all the others pertain directly to the individual's sanctification.

Here I have looked at the community life in a general sense; in the next section I shall consider the more intimate relationship of friendship. Baker's attitude to community life is detached and cautious: there is none of the warmth that we find in the rules of St Basil or of St Benedict. The root is found, once again, in spiritualization. Firstly, the process of sanctification, about which Baker is centrally concerned, is essentially a solitary and inner affair in which other people are peripheral. Secondly, he believes that, anyway, it is through contemplation that "we most efficaciously express our charity ... to our friends" (378). He may say, at one point, that we should "upon occasions offered do all we can to procure or effect the things we pray for, by exhortations, reproofs etc" (222), nevertheless, the main thrust of his position seems to be impelled by the belief that it is the spiritual that really matters, and that the bodily is of lesser value.

1) Friendship

Holy Wisdom has twenty-five or more references to friendship, several of them of some length. The book includes a chapter entitled "The order and degrees of charity to others" (II, 2, 5). The position of friendship in the Christian and indeed human life had exercised writers from classical times. Both Augustine and Aelred of Rievaulx would draw on Cicero in the development of their own ideas.[29] Augustine's personal need for friendship

and his views on the subject are sensitively expounded by Peter Brown. Baker never displays Augustine's warmth or intensity but he echoes some of his ideas.

True friendship for Baker is something centred in God. The motive of the love of others is the divine will and command; the ground is our relationship with God; the end is to bring others to God; the location is the superior will, - anything proceeding from natural sensual affection is "defectuous" (220). A strong natural/supernatural distinction pervades: there can be no merit in natural love (221). The involvement of the senses in any way is undesirable; as to the affections: "root them out of the sensual portion of the soul" (221). "Sensual friendship grounded on external or sensual respects are *(sic)* most unbeseeming persons that have consecrated themselves only to God" (222).

Friendship for others is always focussed on God, never on the other: Charity is defined as "a love of friendship to God , and for His sake only to men or ourselves"; "there cannot be any other true friendship but charity, or the love which we bear to God or for God; ... all other pretended friendships ... are mere sensual self-love" (211). By a rather far-fetched argument Baker goes on to argue that even if people should die for such a ("pretended") friend "the true motive of all was a sensual self-love unto themselves" (211).

The practical outcome of this is that friendship becomes a spiritualized quality divorced from ordinary human concerns. Baker's constant tone is one of warning: "internal livers" should have no "vainly complying friendships" (25, 70); we should "forbear and break off all particular partial friendships and compliances" (44, 192, 198); "sensual friendships" are things that the soul "ought carefully to prevent and avoid"

(112); consideration of friendship should be treated with suspicion (148, cf 85); even "professions of friendships" are grouped with "murmurings, detractions, ... vain and disruptive disputes" as things to be avoided (196); we should place "against excessive (though not unclean) love to persons, friends etc, the love of God and spiritual things" (208). Indeed, things bodily are so irrelevant to real friendship in his eyes that the "supreme object ... of our charity among creatures" (after the humanity of Christ) is "His heavenly Virgin Mother, and after them the heavenly Angels and blessed Saints" (225). "To value ourselves or any mortal friends or kindred before the glorified saints", he continues, "would be irrational and unseemly" (ibid). Nevertheless, Baker can presumably see the value of (spiritual) friendship because he sees "loss of friends" (179) and "deprivation of dearest friends" (268) as a painful mortification which therefore has great potential.

In the context of friendship there is, for Baker, an overt conflict between the senses and charity, between the natural and the supernatural. In this conflict the senses are clearly and unequivocally the enemy. Our findings here support what has already been shown in chapter 4.

I do not wish to draw conclusions which fail to do justice to Baker. There is a value in what he says: it is the common and universal experience of men and women in religious communities that some associations of one person with one other become inward-looking, divisive, exclusive and diminishing. But others, where the individuals are "truly seeking God", to use an expression of St Benedict, mature the participants and create a wider receptivity to others. The presence of grace, or divine charity, or the Holy Spirit, may well be a crucial factor in the latter. On the other hand it is impossible to see how any genuinely human friendship could occur in

the absence of sensual or bodily factors. As one writer points out, "it may help to remember St Thomas's wise reflexion that, because we are men and not angels, a human act accompanied by a natural reaction ("passio") is not more imperfect but more perfect for man, because more truly human."[30] Graced bodiliness seems to lie at the heart of Christian friendship, certainly in the context of an incarnational theology. Baker's theory of friendship, which has been a pervasive one in the religious life right up to the present day, falls short: not only does he fail to bridge the gap between the senses and charity, but he presents their relationship as one of conflict. He fears particularity and is suspicious of intimacy. To claim that we should experience greater love for disembodied angels than for any human friends is to undermine the full value of being human.

m) The spiritual director

The tradition of the spiritual guide is ancient and universal, reaching well beyond the confines of Judaism and Christianity. Its specifically Christian context can be traced back to the disciples who responded to the command of Jesus to "follow me"[31] and who asked "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."[32] The desert tradition of monasticism, favoured by Baker (cf I, 3, 6), gives ample place to the teacher/disciple relationship,[33] and it is taken up by St Benedict whose Rule opens with the words "Listen carefully, my son, to the master's instructions."[34] Baker too will deal with the relationship between spiritual director and disciple.

Holy Wisdom dedicates a chapter to the role of the external director (I, 2, 2), but there are frequent references throughout the book. A director is particularly important for those who are setting out on the spiritual

life: "grace directs them to use the mediation of others" (46). The director will instruct the disciple, "judge her propension to contemplative ways", know when the disciple should move to another degree of prayer and so on (47). The three qualities a director should possess are good natural judgment, learning and experience; the second is the least important of the three (47). Directors should be chosen carefully: scrupulous souls should not choose scrupulous directors (51). Spiritual direction is not tied to holy orders, and lay people, both male and female, if they have the right qualities, can make good directors (51).

In general, Baker's remarks on the director are characterized by common sense. He is aware that in cases of doubt about the spiritual life, whether in prayer or in mortification, a good director can helpfully resolve the difficulty (84, 187, 190). On the other hand he delivers several warnings about the dangers of a bad one: he talks of "bad directors who feed scrupulosity" (246, cf 255) and "unexperienced directors" (31).

Baker's prevailing tone is favourable to the director: he or she is always there when needed (cf 258, 379) and may be helpful even at advanced stages of prayer such as passive unions (473f). Nevertheless, there is a prominent strand in *Holy Wisdom* that curtails the importance of a director. This strand arises from Baker's theory of inner inspiration or of "divine calls", a theory that alarmed some of his contemporaries who felt that it might compromise the authority of the superior. According to Baker "there are two internal lights and teachers, to wit 1) the spirit of corrupt nature; 2) the Divine Spirit" (39). We have already in chapter 4 considered the conflict between them. Ultimately it is God who is our director and "the light of reason, or external directors, or rules prescribed in books, etc" must be subordinate "to the internal directions and inspirations of God's

Holy Spirit" (41). "Divine inspirations", he tells us, are either "immediately communicated to the soul alone; ... or also mediately, with the concurrence of ... an external director" (45).

But the aim is to get beyond the need for a spiritual director, frequent conference with whom can lead to "continual solicitudes, scrupulosities, and dangerous distractions." Instead, the desirable state is "repose, cessation, introversion, and a continual attendance unto what God speaks within unto the soul" (54). Obviously, some will never have sufficient sensitivity to divine inspirations to be able to forego external guides (53), but the more perfect will quit "servile dependence on external teachers" (97), who can never really "order the internal operations of the soul" (103). Baker is somewhat dismissive of directors in the Jesuit sense who receive an account of how the meditation has gone (365), but who perhaps fetter a soul which has become "more solicitous to give satisfaction to her director than to perform her duty to God" (366). Baker's prayer of the will, however, cannot easily be described to directors because of its inner nature (389).

I am setting out here not to draw any controversial conclusions from my consideration of what Baker has to say about the spiritual director. There is a lot of common sense in what he says. A director is a means to an end who, so long as helpful to the disciple, may continue to be used. Much sound practical advice is given about the qualities of directors and how they should help their disciples. It is clear that Baker is speaking from reliable personal experience. Nor am I attempting to give a detailed survey of his theory of divine inspirations; a discussion of these may be found elsewhere.[35]

But there are certain assumptions in what Baker says that accord

with the broad trend that we have already identified. He holds that divine inspirations are "immediately communicated to the soul alone" (45) and that ultimately such communication is preferable to mediated inspirations. The bodily director is superseded by a more spiritual communication. This may be because Baker believes that only an individual person can know his or her inner state, or, more likely, because it is a move in the direction of "spirituality" away from sensuality and bodiliness. Unmediated communications "to the soul alone" may well be a common-place of spiritual teaching, but I shall not consider here the further philosophical problem as to how incarnate human beings may receive such communications.

n) The superior

The position of the superior in religious communities has been prominent throughout the Christian tradition. While perhaps finding a scriptural basis in the heroic obedience of Christ to the Father, it may in monastic communities have derived from the teacher/disciple relationship of the earliest monks and nuns.[36] This relationship was personal and often characterized by mutual love. St Benedict catches something of the personal quality of obedience in his legislation on the position of the abbot in community. Perhaps in the stable Benedictine community such a relationship with the abbot who "is believed to hold the place of Christ in the monastery"[37] is possible. In centralized orders with rapidly changing superiors and provincials of whom the individual religious perhaps saw little, the personal relationship may not have been so possible. In Baker's day the English Benedictine Congregation was organized on the model of a centralized order. This might lie at the root of his ambivalent attitude towards superiors.

The Human Person: Social

Holy Wisdom includes several chapters that deal largely with the superior. The first of these (I, 2, 9) is entitled "Divine calls do not prejudice authority". For several pages (98-101) Baker handles the criticism of his teaching by "some who, either out of ignorance, passion, or interest, have declared themselves enemies thereto ..." because they think it will cause "great prejudice ... to the due authority of superiors" (98). He then proceeds so fulsomely that the reader begins to suspect that there must be a sting in the tail. "All ... commands of superiors ... are ... true divine calls" (99); external obedience is always right against internal inspiration (99); if the superior says something is not a divine inspiration, then it is not (100); obedience is an absolute (101). So much for the subject's reaction to the superior: now Baker turns on the latter. "True it is that in such a case it may happen that a superior may commit a great fault" (101). Whereas a subject will gain by obeying any command of the superior, however unreasonable, superiors themselves have duties: "to penetrate into the dispositions of their subjects" and "to use great discretion" (101); commands "without any regard to the divine will" are "very dangerous to the superior" (101).

In the chapter entitled "The special duties of religious persons" (I, 3, 7) Baker condemns those who "seek superiorities" (141) and dismisses the common belief that "active spirits are more fit for superiorities ... than contemplative" as "most unreasonable and groundless" (142). He develops a list of reasons why this is so, all turning on the greater sensitivity of a contemplative superior to what the religious life is really about, namely, inner prayer. The chapter entitled "The duties of superiors" (I, 3, 8) says little beyond urging the superior to be careful about the sort of people admitted to the monastery (145) and to allow his or her subjects enough

time for their recollections (149).

Whereas his casual remarks urge obedience to superiors (eg 92, 185 etc), there are also criticisms: modern superiors are rather lax in that they have allowed recreation (197, cf 200). The chapter "Of obedience" (II, 2, 14) is fairly critical of superiors. Baker acknowledges the Benedictine ideal of complete openness with one's abbot or abbess;[38] unfortunately it does not work like that, mainly because of the "incapacity and insufficiency of superiors" which he develops at some length by giving a list of things that they ought to do (285). Nevertheless, despite all this, the superior must be obeyed (285).

The most notable impression created by a close study of the religious superior as portrayed in *Holy Wisdom* is one of ambivalence. We know that Baker's own experience of dealing with superiors was far from harmonious; we know that the area of obedience to authority was one of the most controversial aspects of his teaching; we know that Serenus Cressy has attempted to smooth the rough places. But we are assessing the text as it stands and even if we did not know these things, the sense of irresolution and conflict would be clear. Baker's awareness of an ideal of the superior/subject relationship is not unconditionally or full-heartedly expressed; it does not enjoy the warmth of St Benedict's portrayal of the abbot. Instead there are constant caveats drawn, presumably, from bitter experience.

Our overall concern is to see how *Holy Wisdom* fares in the light of incarnational theology; I have claimed that despite its original features the book reflects the views of a substantial body of spiritual writing and that a critique of it is, in fact, a critique of considerably more. I have already identified elements of conflict and dualism, a spiritualizing

tendency and a subtle anti-bodily tone. But Baker's discussion of the superior is perhaps a peculiar feature of his, rather than characteristic of many spiritual writers. His position contrasts sharply with, for instance, that of St Benedict. Arguments levied against Baker's comments may well be effective against Baker alone. But what his discussion of the relationship between superior and subject suggests is a lack of harmony, almost a conflict, in what should be a crucial human relationship for the religious in his or her growth in the spiritual life. In the Benedictine system the abbot or abbess has quasi-sacramental status as a mediator of Christ's presence, but in Baker's views we find an inconsistency and uneasiness.

I have now completed my consideration of the way that Baker handles several of the central relationships of the religious man or woman, with the community in general, with intimates, with the spiritual director and with the superior. While he shows a level of common sense and practicality, there are also difficulties attached to all these relationships. One feels that Baker does not grant sufficient importance to the social context of human personhood and that this failure to do so is what we might have expected in the light of our findings in chapters 4 and 5.

In the concluding sections of the present chapter I shall investigate three themes that relate loosely to the broad subject of the human person as a social entity. The first is Baker's understanding of woman; this investigation needs little justification if we bear in mind that *anthropology* must include both "anerology" and "gynaecology". The others pertain to his understanding of time, of time past and of time future.

III OTHER ISSUES

o) Baker's understanding of woman

Despite the prominence of some women in the Christian tradition, women such as Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Avila, finally declared doctors of the church in 1970, the first women to receive that accolade, the official Church has not been all that aware of the rights and abilities of women.

Aquinas, for instance, in his question *"de productione mulierum"* starts by considering "should woman have been made in the original creation of things". He quotes the dictum of Aristotle "that the female is a male *manqué."* He does not baldly accept this but concludes that "only as regards nature in the individual is the female somehow defective and *manqué."* In the same article he tells us that the appropriate subjection of woman to man is not slavery but a subjection for the woman's "advantage and benefit," arising "because the power of rational discernment is by nature stronger in man."[39] Baker, too, as we shall see in the present section, will assume that women are more sensual and men more rational.

Baker's central experience as a spiritual director was gained during his time with the English Benedictine nuns of Cambrai; many of his writings are based on conferences for them. It is clear that they held him in high esteem and defended his reputation after his death; his friend, Abbess Catherine Gascoigne, felt that *Holy Wisdom* was an accurate summary of his spiritual teaching. With these points in mind we must now consider the understanding of woman that emerges from the pages of *Holy Wisdom*.

Firstly, Baker has adopted certain stereotypes: he talks of "that tenderness and compassionateness which abounds naturally in women" and which makes them "disposed to a greater fervour in charity" (13). While women have "lesser and more contemptible gifts of judgment" (106) and are

weaker in understanding (13, 106, 362) they may show "stronger wills and more fervent affections" (106, cf 362). They are far more prone than are men to experiences in the senses: "devout women ... naturally do more abound with sensible affections than men" (330, cf 477 and 462 where "violent agitations do chiefly befall ... women and devout ignorant men"). Nevertheless, the prayer of meditation may be less suitable for women than that of the will, presumably because the former involves a more energetic use of the mind (362f, 365). Women love chattering: "among women there can scarce be any recreation if the tongue be too much stinted" (200). The Church calls women "the devout sex" and, indeed, one author, whom Baker does not name, is sure that "for one man near ten women went to heaven" (107). In the latter comment we may detect a hint of Baker's humour.

While Baker acknowledges in one place that women may be able to exercise a valuable role of spiritual leadership in convents (51f), many of his references to women are paternalistic: they are "simple, unlearned women" (13), "tender devout souls" (243), "ignorant tender souls" (252), "ignorant, passionate and fearful women" (260), "simple unlearned persons especially women" (304), "ignorant persons including women" (370), "tender innocent virgins" (401). His fundamental view of women should be clear from this list. If he allows in two or three places that "women are more frequently graced ... with the gift of high contemplation than men" (13) and that, as far as God is concerned the Holy Spirit may issue divine calls to men and women equally (110), there are two references that suggest an assumed attitude of male superiority: he speaks of moving beyond "all strange affections, images and distractions" to "a love much more MASCULINE, pure and divine" (10). Here masculinity is associated with spiritualization, with detachment from bodiliness. Secondly, "the contemplations of men are

more noble, sublime, and more exalted in spirit; that is, less partaking of sensible effects ... than those of women" (107).

In one or two places he mentions the dangers of relationships between men and women. "Sinful imaginations" (presumably of a sexual nature) in bed at night are to be diverted quietly by prayer (236); consultations of women with their (male) directors should be sparing because of "dangerous familiarities and friendships" (57); indeed, as St Francis Xavier warns, there is less good "from frequent treaties between persons of different sexes" than "peril in them to both" (58). Friendships "between persons of different sexes" are more prejudicial to prayer than those between persons of the same sex (222). At the back of his mind, of course, is the sin of Adam, "hearkening to the flattering temptations of his wife, seduced by the devil" (40).

As we might expect certain women are idealized.[40] He speaks of the "yet more supereminent degree" of contemplation in "His own most heavenly Virgin-Mother" (16); he doubts whether any creature apart from "our Blessed Lady hath ever arrived to so high a degree of perfection in this life as to become wholly impassible" (241); the "supreme object ... of our charity" after Christ should be "His heavenly Virgin Mother" (225). Prayer to Mary features very rarely, however (395f, cf 254, 431). St Teresa is mentioned warmly on several occasions.[41]

In the previous chapter we considered Baker's use of the feminine pronoun for the soul while using masculine pronouns for the human person; at one place in *Holy Wisdom* he allows this feminine usage to generate a rather arresting metaphor: "here the soul is in a case like to a tender mother with unspeakable satisfaction regarding her most amiable child ... In like manner, a soul does actually regard God" (447).[42] This kind of imagery

in Baker is very rare, however.

This is not the place to consider in detail the impact of recent feminist theology; even so, we need to glance at certain relevant issues. Peter Brown comments on "the studied misogyny of much ascetic literature" and its social implications in the late antique period.[43] Margaret Miles shows how such an attitude, in various guises, prevails in later Christian history: for most Christian authors "rationality clearly existed more strongly in males."[44] The converse of this was that women were particularly associated with sensuality. Further, "the association of females with body and males with reason, though it was prior to and more widespread than Christian tradition, is also endemic to Christianity."[45] Hence the presumed superiority of man over woman was bound up with the superiority of the spiritual over the bodily.

Baker's assumptions about woman and man symbolize and express his understanding of the bodily in relation to the spiritual. The crucial quotation is where he uses St Bernard: "If bodily ease may indeed be a help to the spirit, it is to be admitted for that purpose; for, as St Bernard says, as man was not made for the woman, but the woman for man, so spiritual exercises were not made for corporal, but corporal for spiritual" (427). Here the woman/body, man/spirit parallel is made explicit. Just as the senses are inferior to the spirit, so the woman is inferior to the man. Despite the fact that women are particularly suited to prayer of the will, the higher contemplation is described as "masculine" (10) and it is masculine because it is purer, that is, more removed from the bodily. It may be objected that Baker always uses "she" language for the soul: I have already shown, however, that "soul" is used in different senses. As the soul becomes more spiritualized, "spirit" language takes over and the spirit is

never referred to as "she".

As with everything he says, Baker is a child of his time: it would be unreasonable to expect to find a feminist theology between the lines of *Holy Wisdom*. Baker apparently got on well with women and there *is* a level of sensitivity and appreciation in what he says.[46] Many women of the time would have found him encouraging and it may be the case that his attitude is less patronizing than that of contemporaries.[47] Nevertheless, patronizing it still is. A patronizing attitude is one assuming a superiority. In spiritual writers such as Baker, this attitude to women is closely linked with the evaluative dualism that exalts the spiritual at the expense of the bodily. Incarnational anthropology, dwelling as it does on the value of concrete embodiment, invests equal worth in the state of being a man and the state of being a woman. Therefore, Baker's attitude towards women falls within the framework of his general anthropology and shares its inadequacy.

p) The golden age

The incarnation is about the particularization of the divine in human history: Jesus Christ, a particular man, was born, lived and died in a particular time and place. This particularity led pagan opponents to question the apparent arbitrariness of it.[48] In the Catholic tradition the incarnation continues through Christ's body, the church, and Christians are part of that incarnation through the sacraments of incorporation. Thus the incarnation is both a moment and a continuum. Incarnational theology values the unique events of the past: the life, death and resurrection of Jesus which focus the history of Israel, and the development of the Christian tradition down the ages. It values the hope of future fulfilment. But for individual human beings, bodily and particularized, the crucial time of grace

and of experience of incarnation is the present. The memories of the past and the aspirations of the future are concretized in the present.

This is reflected in the very title of *Gaudium et Spes:* "The Church in the world of the present time *(De Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis).* Of this Charles Moeller writes:

> The Church is in the world of today and cannot withdraw from it. This fact gives rise to a series of obligations, responsibilities and questions for the Church. Furthermore, the words "of this time" suggest the biblical theme of the *kairos,* the *hodie,* the "today" which God speaks.[49]

The implications of this are that the two extremes of living in the past in a world of nostalgic reminiscence, or living in the future in a context of vague, unfulfilled hopes, fail to accord with the full requirements of such incarnational theology. What is required is a positive, optimistic commitment to the present time of graced embodiment. Thus, incarnational theology has implications for a Christian understanding of time.

My comments here are necessarily cursory and merely provide a context for the consideration of a theme that runs throughout *Holy Wisdom.* While past standards may have been better than those of the present and while Baker is entirely committed to the implications of living a spiritual life in the present, the present is constantly devalued in comparison with the past.

For Baker "the true spirit of religion" is "too much generally decayed" (25); "true spirituality is in these days so rare" (103); "the true spirit of religion ... is ... miserably decayed in these days" (129, cf 133); "in these wicked times, in which there is such a decay of charity in the world and of fervour in religion" (268); "the great decay of religious discipline and perfection in the world" (283, cf 284, 291); "corporal

infirmity and incapacity" of spirit, "especially in these days" (334). Such phrases could be multiplied. For Baker the present represents a miserable decline from the glory of the past.

This pessimism about conditions of the present is linked with a pronounced respect and admiration for hero figures of the (remote) past: "ancient martyrs ... rushed before the persecuting judges to confess the name of Christ" (77) (and this in an age when many of Baker's contemporaries including fellow Benedictines were being put to death for loyalty to their faith); "it is wonderful to read of that depth of recollectedness and most profound introversion to which some ancient solitary persons ... have come" (122); "in ancient times many holy souls did attain to perfect contemplation by the mere use of vocal prayer" (302, cf 136). He praises "souls that lived (as anciently they did) ... having no images of creatures" (308); "this was the contemplation of many of the ancient hermits and is, no doubt of some in these days" (463).

Besides the various scattered references, Baker dedicates a chapter to "the contemplation of the primitive monks" (I, 3, 6). For him the quality of ancient practice surpasses that of his contemporaries: the ancients showed "incomparably more abstraction of life", austerities "beyond the strength of our infirm corporal complexions" and external employments more conducive to prayer "than those ordinarily practised in these days" (136). In view of Baker's great near-contemporaries such as Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Francis de Sales, it would be surprising if his derogation of the present was total. In fact, he acknowledges once or twice that there are "several holy persons" ... who ... "teach more accurately than formerly the knowledge and practice of pure internal contemplative prayer" and "that sole exercise in a good measure" makes amends "for all other defects in

which we seem to come short of the ancients" (140). But this is no disparagement of the ancients, because methods of prayer "in those times were not at all necessary" (307).

For Baker there was greater rigour in the past (196f, 199f) and greater discipline (145); the "practice of antiquity" is favoured (148). This preference for the past is made explicit in another way: with regard to the conversations of religious during periods of recreation, "it were better to talk of the occurrences of former times than of the present" (201).

At one point Baker says that active contemplation is "almost an entire reparation and restitution of the soul to the state of primitive innocence" (454). The sense of former glory is something close to Baker. But for him the golden age has become tarnished. We might expect a reverence for the past in a man who pursued antiquarianism, who searched out the medieval historical precursors of the new English Benedictine Congregation and who relied so much on earlier literary authorities in his spiritual writings. The period in which he lived, in difficult conditions, exiled from his native-land, might naturally breed a pessimism. Nevertheless, we are attempting to judge *Holy Wisdom* not merely as an historical artifact but as a book of spiritual instruction valuable in the 20th century.

I would suggest that Baker's idealizing of the past at the expense of the present tends to lower the value of the present bodily experience of human persons in their individual and social context. This idealization thus lends support to the anti-incarnational tendencies that I have already identified.

q) The end

In this section I shall consider teleological rather than spatial or

temporal aspects of the spiritual life of the human person, although the end is something not yet achieved, and therefore in the future. Baker has no sense of a communal end such as might be found in the eschatology of St Paul. For him, the "only principle end why a religious person has engaged himself in a life of obedience is the good and advancement of his soul" (285). Only once is the body explicitly included in the scheme of salvation: referring to the human person, he writes that the end "for which he was made ... (is) "eternal beatitude both in soul and body in heaven" (3).

While the final end is an individual union with God in heaven, "a new right unto eternal happiness (perhaps) more sublime than man in innocency was destined to" (6), Baker considers the preliminary end of this life: "uninterrupted attention and union with God as was practised by Adam in innocency" (7). But this will be brought about in different ways: while the "general end of man's creation ... is a perfect and constant union in spirit to God by love" (14), the end of the contemplative life is "so supereminently noble and divine that beatified souls do prosecute the same, and no other, in heaven" (17).

This end of the contemplative life is "sublime" (18), "glorious" (163), "the state of perfection" (487). The "union in spirit with God by love is entirely supernatural and divine" (163, cf 96). If Baker is talking about the presence of God's Spirit as the essential means of bringing about this union, then that is one thing. But, as we might expect, he is talking also about a move away from the natural rather than a transformation of the natural. "This is the end of all perfection", he says, "to have the soul become so extenuated and purified from all carnal desires as that it may continually be in an actual ascent to spiritual things" (317).

Becoming more spiritual is what primarily interests Baker: "our union

in spirit with God" (310); drawing a person "more and more deeply towards the spirit, in the perfect operations whereof consists the consummation of an internal life" (333). Indeed, as we have seen already in the previous chapter, "our chiefest happiness and perfection are ... that we shall be like unto angels both in our knowledge and love" (451).

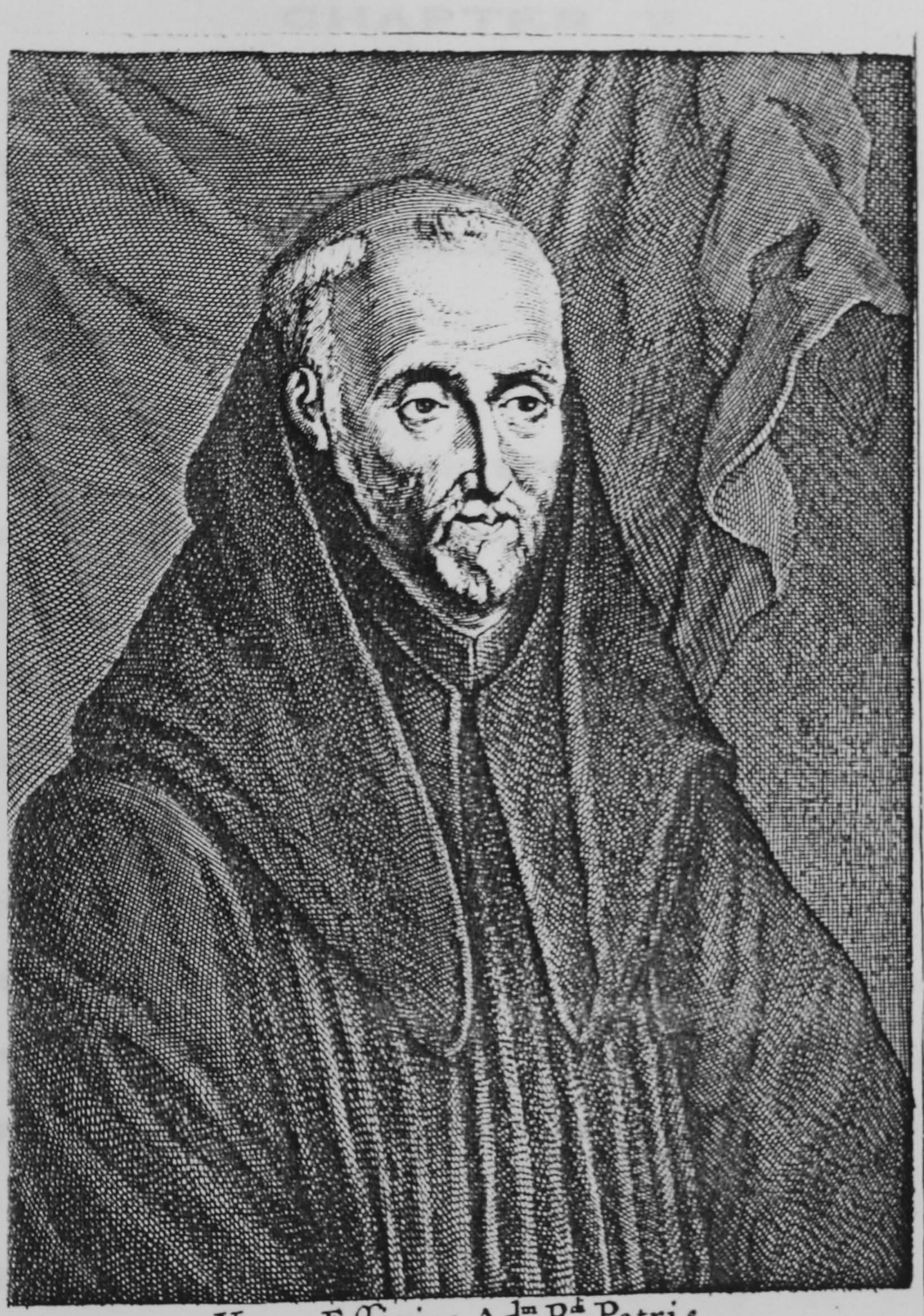
Despite his single reference to "beatitude both in soul and body" (3), the final happiness of the human person, found in a loving union with God, is essentially spiritual and individual. This is the tone that pervades *Holy Wisdom*.

r) Concluding remark

At the root of this chapter has been the theology of the body of Christ,[50] with its practical implications in terms of community and relationship. In the words of Vatican II, "God did not create man as a solitary ... by his innermost nature man is a social being, and unless he relate himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential."[51] This may appear to be stating the obvious, but many spiritual writings have tended to focus on the sanctification of the individual, often at the expense of the community. Miles refers to "the blatantly dualistic, individualistic and privatistic focus that characterizes the literature of Christian devotion."[52] Baker, as we have seen, shares this focus.

At the heart of community and relationship is communication which is entirely dependent on embodiment.[53] A disparagement of bodiliness and a move towards the spiritualization of experience are linked with an emphasis on the individual. Thus the social context of human life becomes peripheral. There is a crude level of individualism in which a person serves others for the furthering of his or her own spiritual development. This is certainly

present in Baker. But he hints also at a more sophisticated justification of his individualistic focus. This is by way of a kind of "religious Thatcherism": the unremitting pursuit of individual spiritual advantage ultimately betters the whole community. Yet here, surely, is a case of the end justifying the means, and an absence of integration. Incarnational theology requires a human life that is embodied, integrated and experienced within the body of Christ. Spiritualization, linked with individualism, draws the human person away from that locus and hence from the full implications of being human.



Vera Effigies Ad.^m R.^d Patris
AVGUSTINI BAKER,
Ætatis 66. Anno Domini 1641.
I nothinge Am. Haue nothinge. nothinge Craue
But IESVS. he redeems, all els enslaue Luc. Nuffs sculpsit.

Contemporary engraving of Baker, issued with some first editions of *Sancta Sophia*

CHAPTER 7

"SUBMISSION OF HIS WRITINGS TO LAWFUL AUTHORITY"

CONCLUSION

a) Introduction

It is appropriate now, in this short final chapter, to draw together the various conclusions I have reached and to summarize what I have done. I chose to study *Holy Wisdom* because it presents the essence of the spiritual teaching of Augustine Baker. That teaching has been influential both within the English Benedictine Congregation and beyond it. What I established in chapter 2 was that Baker's ascetical theology is neither eccentric nor unique. Peculiarly receptive to the various spiritual currents around him, his work reflects much in common with other ascetical writers. Admittedly, there is an unusual feature here, an idiosyncratic nuance there, but his theology, and particularly his Christian anthropology, is shared with others and may to some extent be taken as representative. In addition, he stands at a privileged point in the transmission of various strands of spiritual tradition: an English, or rather Welsh, man, established on the Continent in the first half of the 17th century, passing on the fruits of patristic and medieval piety, but widely read in the spirituality of his own and of the previous century. The fact that *Holy Wisdom* encapsulates so much that was considered unexceptionable is important to my purpose. Although my primary intent has been to develop a criticism of the particular book, a secondary aim has been an investigation of what that book represents. If *Holy Wisdom* succumbs to my criticism, then other writings will not go unscathed.

These brief points should re-establish the relevance and the extent of what I have tried to do in this thesis.

b) Incarnational theology as the starting point

In the general introduction and in chapter 2 I defended the process of submitting an historical text of the 17th century to a theological critique of the 20th. Proponents of *Holy Wisdom* recommend it as a living text of spiritual instruction. Such a recommendation releases the work from the security of datedness and makes it fair game for the attention of the theological insights of the present day. What I investigated was the Christian anthropology of *Holy Wisdom*, that is, the way in which Baker understands the human person.

My starting point was a particular understanding of incarnational theology. This is, of course, an umbrella term covering a range of loosely connected views rather than the name of a systematic or monolithic theology. Starting from different perspectives, scriptural, philosophical, historical and dogmatic, I moved on to draw out in chapter 3 a set of incarnational principles deriving from the teaching of the second Vatican Council and especially of *Gaudium et Spes*. My intent was to use these to provide the basis from which the anthropology of *Holy Wisdom* would be criticized. I suspected that there was a tension between the implications of such incarnational theology and the actual spiritual anthropology of Baker. My findings in this thesis bear out such a suspicion.

My incarnational perspective can be summed up very briefly. The incarnation of the Son of God, which lies at the heart of most understandings of Christianity, entails the goodness of embodied human personhood and the central position of the body within the integrated human

person. These entailments in turn imply that human experience, of which "spiritual" experience is part, occurs within the context of integrated personhood. Chapter 3 developed these ideas in some detail. They were used in various ways in the core of the thesis, the critique of *Holy Wisdom* carried out in chapters 4-6.

c) The issue of conflict: chapter 4

I approached the text in two main ways. The first was through a sensitivity to the pattern of language and a reading between the lines. The second was through an analysis of the explicit content. The first way was prominent in chapter 4, "The Conflict Model".

I attempted to spell out the implications of the metaphorical texture of the book. I found that a conflict model underlay much of what Baker was saying and that this model had considerable implications for anthropology. The human person, far from being seen as a centre of integration, was viewed as an arena of conflict. Conflict, in itself, is an undeniable part of Christian tradition. The opposition to sin lies at the heart of the New Testament witness; the second Vatican Council affirms that "the whole life of men ... shows itself to be a struggle ... between good and evil."[2] From the point of view of the incarnational theologian, however, problems arose for Baker because of where he located the conflict. Elements of the human person, in themselves neutral if not good, became enemies in the spiritual battle. His statement of this was not always explicit: very often the implication arose from the cumulative effect of the language chosen. The tone of a piece of writing, while communicating with greater subtlety than the explicit content, communicates none the less.

It is not necessary here to rehearse all the issues dealt with in

chapter 4. With varying degrees of complexity, the affections and passions, the imagination and the senses were seen as foes within the arena of the person. Creatures and the world were seen as enemies coming from without. The overall effect was that what should be positive within the framework of incarnational theology was viewed as negative. In addition, several elements of this chapter - the anti-feminist image of nature as a cunning temptress, for example - would recur in different ways in my analysis of the more explicit content of *Holy Wisdom* in chapter 5 and 6.

If I were to sum up chapter 4 as a premise in the skeletal argument of this thesis, it would be as follows: Baker (and the spiritual writers who share his anthropology) uses a conflict model in expounding the spiritual life, but locates the conflict in such a way that it undermines the value of embodiment and integration.

d) The individual person: chapter 5

In chapter 5, while retaining a sensitivity to the linguistic currents in the text, I focussed on the more explicit content. A detailed exposition of Baker's understanding of the body, the soul, the spirit and the faculties of the soul suggested that at root his ideal is an angelic one. The real "internal liver" is the one who is moving away from embodied experience to something unbodily and "spiritual". Real human personhood for Baker is located in the soul which must become increasingly emancipated from bodily things. His view, once again, represents a strand within Christian spirituality that he shares with others.

This brief summary is, of course, an over-simplification of what was developed in chapter 5. But as a simple premise in the argument of the thesis, I would state the chapter as follows: Baker's understanding of the

human person as an individual turns on his giving central value to the process of spiritualization at the expense of embodiment.

e) The social person: chapter 6

The basic method of chapter 6 was the same as that of chapter 5: a drawing out of the explicit while retaining an awareness of the impact of the imagery. The incarnation leads into the doctrine of the church as body of Christ and so, for the incarnational theology I have advocated, human personhood is defined and experienced in a social context. In chapter 6 I spelled out Baker's understanding of social features of Christianity such as the sacraments, common prayer and relationships. On this subject there was perhaps more variety among spiritual writers: in chapter 2 I mentioned some areas of Baker's teaching that were potentially controversial in his own day. But his attitudes were by no means eccentric and what he says was considered to be entirely within the bounds of Catholic orthodoxy.

In terms of the argument of the thesis, chapter 6 makes the following assertion: Baker's primary focus on a spiritualized individualism is supported by an attitude towards the social dimension of life which conflicts with incarnational principles. A disparagement of the social is related to a deeper disparagement of the central means of social relationship, namely, embodiment.

f) Synopsis of the argument of the thesis

It would be valuable now to sum up the previous sections of the present chapter as well as the thesis as a whole. In schematic form, my argument is as follows:

Conclusion

1. *Holy Wisdom* is an orthodox work of Catholic spirituality which shares features in common with many other such works (ch 2).

2. It is also a work of continuing spiritual influence (ch 2).

Therefore, 3. A criticism of *Holy Wisdom* is also a criticism of other Christian spiritual works that share its anthropology.

and 4. It may justifiably be criticized from the perspective of modern theological insights.

5. The incarnation, a central doctrine of Christianity, entails the goodness of embodied human personhood and the important position of the body within the integrated human person. These entailments in turn imply that human experience, of which "spiritual" experience is part, occurs within the context of integrated personhood (ch 3).

This is the incarnational perspective, derived from the witness of scripture and of later authorities, particularly Vatican II, from which the Christian anthropology of *Holy Wisdom* is criticized.

6. Baker uses a conflict model in expounding the spiritual life, but locates the conflict in such a way that it undermines the value of embodiment and integration (ch 4).

7. His understanding of the human person as an individual turns on his giving central value to the process of spiritualization at the expense of embodiment (ch 5).

8. His primary focus on a spiritualized individualism is supported by an attitude towards the social dimension of life which conflicts with incarnational principles. A disparagement of the social is related to a deeper disparagement of the central means of social relationship, namely, embodiment (ch 6).

> Therefore, from the perspective of incarnational theology, the Christian anthropology of *Holy Wisdom* and of many writings that share such anthropology is inadequate.

g) "A time to break down and a time to build up"

I feel some regret that my findings have resulted in a somewhat negative assessment of Baker. Strangely, I feel I would have liked him very much as a person. If my conclusion on *Holy Wisdom* seems more of a whimper than a bang, then in this final section I will allow myself the indulgence of a little visionary speculation.

At the conclusion of her assessment of the devotional manuals, Margaret Miles identifies their two underlying assumptions: firstly, the existence and superior value of a spiritual world; secondly, that individuals must resolve to identify with this, extricating themselves from the conditions of ordinary life.[3] I would ascribe these with the label "evaluative dualism".

In the course of nineteen years of Benedictine monastic life, I have come to question first the latter and then the former of these assumptions. My doubts arose from a sense of the unity of human personhood: all my experiences are my experiences, and not the experiences of a soul or of a

body. I came across people who tried to use traditional monastic practices such as silence, solitude and detachment as an escape route, a way of living an angelic life rather than of coming to terms with the full implications of being a human being. I do not for a moment deny that some people have reached a full and integrated humanity through monastic life; for others, however, the life has caused or enhanced a process of disintegration. Their humanity has been atrophied and they have been left with a deep and unarticulated bitterness and misery.

Reflecting on the incarnation and the goodness of creation made me realize that the divine is known in integrated human experience. No doubt there are moments of more intense communion with God; quiet reflection enhances our sense of human personhood; the prayer of praise, the practice of *lectio divina*, times of solitude, detachment from the urge to possess or control, all these can lead to a deeper, freer humanity. But at the end of the day, being an embodied human person is grounded in joyful relationships with others, in serving and, in turn, being cared for, in creative work, in insistent concern for what is just and right, in the feel of the wind and the sting of seawater and the fresh, transient smell of bluebells.

Now angels cannot delight in bluebells: to do so is our duty and our privilege, if we are being ourselves, that is, human beings. A fundamental misapprehension of Baker and of the ascetical teaching he represents is that these things of the senses and nature, of the affections and of human friendships, are somehow preliminary. For him, and perhaps even more for Augustine before him, if they are used as anything other than signposts, then they become shackles, coarse chains that hold back the soul from soaring. Now this view of theirs requires a spiritual world that is greater than the material and a human soul that is spiritual and is the locus of

essential human personhood.

It may be the case that we cannot avoid language suggesting division, that ambivalent words such as "spiritual" and "material" must be retained. The problem with them is that they inevitably suggest a greater degree of dis-integration than is appropriate. My experience, supported by the implications of incarnational theology and in harmony with such "modern" concerns as feminist theology and eco-theology, suggests that the direction for true Christian development is towards integrated experience.[4] In other words all our human experiences form a sacramental matrix and "spiritual" does not mean "unbodily" or "other" but refers to a quality of depth or intensity.

Holy Wisdom has its strengths: there is a value in restraining greed, in savouring obedience, in spending time in prayer. Perhaps, at root, we and Baker are concerned with the same fundamentals. There is no doubt that traditional spiritual teaching has helped many men and women to richness of life. But for today his anthropology is an articulation that bewilders, a teaching that misleads. To move on from where Baker has led, in search of new language, is no discredit to him, but an inescapable quality of the religious enterprise itself.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Exponents include such writers as David Knowles, E. I. Watkin and John Main; see chapter 2, section 1).

2. Published by Anthony Clarke Books, Wheathampstead, 1972; Sitwell is a monk of St Laurence's, now at Ampleforth, the community to which Baker was affiliated.

CHAPTER 1

1. See line 2 of the poem "On the Picture and Writings of the Late Venerable F. Augustin Baker" by Fr Leander Norminton OSB (1615-1665), printed as a frontispiece to the first edition of *Sancta Sophia* (1657). Both poem and picture are reproduced in this thesis: see list of illustrations.

2. On Augustine and the Gregorian mission see, for example, Peter Hunter Blair, *The World of Bede* (Secker & Warburg, London, 1970) and Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (Batsford, London, 1972).

3. See, for example, Joyce Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (Allen & Unwin, London, 1971) and Derek Baker (ed), *Schism, Heresy and Religious Protest* (Cambridge UP, 1972).

4. Norbert Birt, *Obit Book of the English Benedictines 1600-1912* (Gregg, England, 1970).

5. See chapter 2, section m).

6. This section offers a very brief summary; my information is drawn mainly from David Lunn, *The English Benedictines 1540-1688* (Burns & Oates, London, 1980).

7. Lunn (1980), p 2.

8. Lunn (1980), pp 160f.

9. See Appendix 1 for a discussion of sources.

10. Augustine was his monastic name.

11. Justin McCann and Hugh Connolly (eds), *Catholic Record Society*, Vol 33 (London, 1933), p 54. Henceforth, Prichard's life and Baker's autobiography, both published in CRS 33, will be referred to as P and B, with the CRS page number.

12. B, p 16.

13. B, p 18.

14. P, p 54.

15. B, p 28.

16. B, p 29.

17. B, p 31.

18. Ibid.

19. Soon, in 1624, to become Pembroke College; see footnote, CRS 33, p 40.

20. B, p 40.

21. B, p 41.

22. B, p 42.

23. B, p 34.

24. B, p 47.

25. B, p 46.

26. Ibid.

27. P, p 65.

28. P, p 67.

29. P, p 66.

30. See Placid Spearritt, "The Survival of Mediaeval Spirituality among the Exiled English Black Monks", *American Benedictine Review*, Vol XXV:3 (Sept 1974), p 290.

31. P, p 72.

32. Ibid.

33. B, p 50.

34. P, pp 75f.

35. P, p 79.

36. P, p 80.

37. CRS 33, footnote p 82.

Notes

38. See chapter 2, section b).

39. See Appendix 2.

40. In fact some English Catholic institutions had already been founded, for example, Lady Mary Percy's community of Benedictine nuns at Brussels in 1598. See Bernard Green, *The English Benedictine Congregation* (Catholic Truth Society, London, n d, 1980s), p 9.

41. CRS 33, p 4.

42. Mental prayer is a key notion in Baker's spiritual teaching and refers, broadly speaking, to any form of inner prayer. See chapter 5 for comments on the use of the imagination, will etc in mental prayer. The term has been standard in the tradition of Catholic spirituality for several hundred years. The Abbé Courbon, writing in the late 17th century, says: "Prayer is a movement or an elevation of the soul towards God. When this movement is manifested outwardly by words it is called vocal prayer; it is called mental prayer when it remains hidden in the depths of the heart. Thus mental prayer is nothing else than an interior movement of the soul towards God" (*Familiar Instructions on the Degrees of Mental Prayer* (Kelly, Loughrea, 1927), p 3). This accords with Baker's understanding of the expression. For Eugene Boylan, a 20th century writer, "in what is called mental prayer, we endeavour to originate ... thoughts and desires in ourselves by some reflection" (*Difficulties in Mental Prayer* (Gill, Dublin, 1946), p 2).

43. P, p 85.

44. Lunn (1980), pp 92f.

45. B, pp 11f.

46. James Gaffney, "Biographical Preliminaries for a Life of Dom Augustine Baker", *American Benedictine Review*, Vol XIX:4 (Dec 1968), p 524.

47. P, p 97.

48. Justin McCann (ed), *The Confessions of Venerable Fr Augustine Baker* (BO & W, London, 1922), p 75.

49. P, p 98.

50. The community of St Laurence's left Dieulouard in Lorraine at the time of the French Revolution and eventually settled at Ampleforth in Yorkshire.

51. Lunn (1980), pp 108f.

52. Conventual life began at Cambrai in December 1623. The community fled France at the Revolution and eventually settled at Stanbrook Abbey, near Worcester.

53. Apart from the biographies, see Baker's *Life of Dame Gertrude More*, Vol 1 (Benedict Weld-Blundell (ed), Washbourne, London, 1910) and Benedictines of Stanbrook (eds), *In a Great Tradition* (John Murray, London, 1956), pp 3f.

54. *In a Great Tradition*, ch 1.

55. See Weld-Blundell (1910) and David Hugh Farmer (ed), *Benedict's Disciples* (Fowler Wright, Leominster, 1980), pp 263-281.

56. *In a Great Tradition*, pp 14f.

57. See present chapter, section g).

58. Salvin's life of Baker, and Serenus Cressy's are both published in Justin McCann (ed), *The Life of Father Augustine Baker* (BO & W, London, 1933). Henceforth, Salvin's and Cressy's lives will be referred to as S and Cr respectively. Page references will be to McCann. The present reference is S, pp 28f.

59. P, p 122.

60. P, p 132.

61. Lunn (1980), p 208.

62. Ibid.

63. P, p 147; S, pp 35f.

64. P, p 147.

65. P, p 152.

66. McCann (1922); details in note 48.

67. Cr, pp 65f.

68. P, p 84.

69. Ibid.

70. Cr, p 66.

71. McCann (ed), *Confessions*, henceforth Conf; pp 51f.

72. *Holy Wisdom*, p 456.

73. A mortification is an ascetical practice or experience which serves to help a person to "die to" their "compulsive pursuit of lesser goods" in the interest of their relationship with God. See Margaret Miles, "Mortification" in Gordon S. Wakefield (ed), *A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (SCM, London, 1983), p 270.

Notes

74. Conf, p 61.

75. Ibid.

76. Conf, p 67.

77. Conf, pp 67f; for these terms see chapter 4, section h) and chapter 5, sections l) and r).

78. Cr, p 89.

79. Conf, p 94.

80. Conf, p 88.

81. Conf, p 89.

82. Conf, p 93.

83. Conf, p 94.

84. Conf, p 96.

85. Conf, p 94.

86. Cr, p 138.

87. David Knowles, *The English Mystical Tradition* (B & O, London, 1961), pp 160f; see chapter 2, section i).

88. HW, p 456.

89. Ibid p 459.

90. Conf, p xl.

91. Conf, p xiii.

92. Grace Jantzen, "Mysticism and Experience", *Religious Studies*, Vol 25, No 3 (Sep 1989).

93. Knowles (1961), p 187.

94. P, p 117.

95. S, p 8.

96. S, p 49.

97. Letter of Abbess Catherine Gascoigne to Cressy, published in *Sancta Sophia*, (1657), Vol 1, p 4.

98. S, p 26.

99. P, pp 145f.

100. P, pp 130f tells of Francis Gascoigne and Joseph Erington. These two youths both died young. Baker wrote a biography of Gascoigne which, according to McCann in 1933, "is not extant" (CRS 33, footnote p 130), but which, apparently, forms the content of the recently discovered MS acquired by Downside Abbey in 1983. Philip Jebb gives a description of the MS and its contents ("A Hitherto Unnoticed Autograph Manuscript of the Venerable Augustine Baker", *Downside Review*, No 356 (Jan 1986).

101. P, p 131; S, pp 25f.

102. S, p 28.

103. P, p 132.

104. For a summary of the facts of his life see Joseph Gillow, *A Biographical Dictionary of the English Catholics*, Vol 1 (B & O, London, 1885), pp 592f.

105. Quoted from Anthony Wood's *Athenae Oxonienses* (London, 1691) by Lunn (1980), p 133.

106. Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans* (Secker & Warburg, London, 1987), p 227; see also John Tanner, "Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, Cavalier and Catalyst", *Royal Stuart Papers* V (1974) and David Lunn, "Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland", *Royal Stuart Papers XI* (1977).

107. Trevor-Roper, p 183.

108. Ibid p 184.

109. Lunn (1980), p 132.

110. Ibid.

111. Trevor-Roper, p 186.

112. Trevor-Roper's "hero" is Clarendon (pp 209-214), who, according to his admirer, would reject sterile contemplation and in his own life resolve "the old debate between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*" (p 214).

113. See Gillow for a list of his works with comments (pp 594f); also Hilary Steuert, "A Study in Recusant Prose: Dom Serenus Cressy, 1605-74", in two parts, *Downside Review*, Nos 204 & 205 (Spr & Sum 1948).

114. Steuert (1948a), p 177.

115. Steuert (1948b), p 289.

116. Steuert (1948b), p 301.

117. Lunn (1980), p 131.

118. Macmillan, London, 1882, Vol 1, pp 328-337.

119. Lunn (1980), p 132.

120. Weldon, Vol 2, p 315.

121. Especially Julian of Norwich; see Edmund Colledge and James Walsh (eds), *Julian of Norwich: Showings* (Paulist Press, New York, 1978), p 17.

122. Lunn (1980), p 217.

CHAPTER 2

1. Serenus Cressy, "Preface to the reader", *Sancta Sophia*, 1st edition, Vol 1, p iii.

2. Justin McCann, "Father Baker's Tercentenary", *Downside Review*, No 180 (Oct 1941), p 356.

3. Ibid p 357.

4. Ibid.

5. David Lunn, "Augustine Baker and the English Mystical Tradition", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol XXVI No 3 (Jul 1975), p 274.

6. Spearritt (1974), p 302.

7. P, p 107.

8. Quoted by Luke Bell, "Augustine Baker's Exposition of the Rule of St Benedict", *Downside Review*, No 367 (Apr 1989), p 86.

9. Lunn (1975), p 274.

10. McCann (1941), p 357.

11. Ibid p 358.

12. *The Life of Fr Augustine Baker*... (London, 1933), pp 160f.

13. "Ten More Baker MSS", *Ampleforth Journal*, Vol LXIII Pt 2 (Jun 1958), p 77.

14. Spearritt (1974), p 305.

15. This MS, "Directions for Contemplation", is reported by Stephen Parks, curator of the Osborn Collection, in *A Catalogue of Manuscripts Exhibited in the Beinecke Rare Book & MS Library, October 1974-February 1975* (Yale University Library, 1975), item 23. Dr Parks informed me that he had acquired the MS from a New York dealer,

William Salloch, in 1975. He corresponded with Placid Spearritt about the MS, and kindly sent me a copy of the correspondence.

16. Jebb (1986); see previous chapter, note 100.

17. See bibliography (primary sources) for details.

18. Published by Justin McCann, *The Confessions of Fr Augustine Baker* (London, 1922).

19. Further extracts from Baker's writings are published by Bell (1989), Hywel Wyn Owen and Luke Bell, "The Upholland Anthology: An Augustine Baker Manuscript", *Downside Review*, No 369 (Oct 1989) and Hywel Wyn Owen, "Extracts from the Upholland Anthology: An Augustine Baker Manuscript", *Downside Review*, No 370 (Jan 1990) and "More Extracts from the Upholland Anthology: An Augustine Baker Manuscript", *Downside Review*, No 371 (Apr 1990).

20. See Justin McCann, "Father Baker's Devotions", *Ampleforth Journal*, Vol XXXIV Pt 2 (Spr 1929) and "Dame Gertrude's Devotions", *Ampleforth Journal*, Vol XXXIV Pt III (Sum 1929).

21. For example, Benedict Weld-Blundell (ed), *Contemplative Prayer* (Washbourne, London, 1907).

22. See the title page of *Sancta Sophia*, 1st edition, reproduced in this thesis (see under list of illustrations).

23. See, for example, various writings of McCann and Spearritt.

24. P, pp 160f.

25. P, p 116.

26. Peter Salvin describes a conversation he had with Fr Francis Hull: "I smiled and replied: 'I suppose you take me to be a Bakerist' - as some would nickname those who endeavour to practise his instructions." (S, p 28).

27. Lunn (1980), p 215.

28. Lunn (1975), p 270.

29. For the approbations, see 1st edition, pp 311f after the 3rd treatise; they are reprinted in the 1876 edition, pp 550f.

30. P, p 118.

31. It is not the case, as Low claims (p 53), that "Baker's doctrines were unanimously approved" at this chapter. Rather, the commissioning of the digest was approved "*unanimi consensu ... nemini reclamante*". See Justin McCann, "Some Benedictine Letters in the Bodleian", *Downside Review*, No 141 (Oct 1931), p 465 footnote; also Lunn (1975), p 272.

32. McCann (1931), p 472.

33. Dated March 3rd 1655, quoted by McCann (1931), p 478.

34. See chapter 1, section f).

35. Lunn (1975), p 271.

36. Ibid p 272.

37. 1st edition, Vol 1, p 4.

38. Vol 1, pp 12f.

39. See, for example, Lunn (1968b), p 249.

40. Lunn (1975), p 277 & (1980), p 217.

41. Weldon, Vol 2, p 438.

42. Lunn (1975), p 273.

43. Spearritt (1974), p 300.

44. Weldon, Vol 2, p 315.

45. Ibid p 316.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. "*Caelestis Pastor*", November 20th 1687; see DS 2201f.

49. Spearritt (1974), p 299.

50. Ibid.

51. Geoffrey Scott, "The English Benedictine Congregation and the English Mission, 1685-1794", unpublished PhD thesis (King's College London, 1984), ch 4, pp 131-150.

52. Scott, p 132.

53. Ibid p 134.

54. 1857 edition, p 3.

55. Ibid.

56. See bibliography.

57. For example, sections of the MS "Custodia Cordis", copied by Br James Roberts, a novice, in May 1888; presently in Douai Abbey library.

58. For example, Weld-Blundell (1907); for others, see Low's bibliography.

59. Anthony Clarke, Wheathampstead, 1972.

60. Lunn (1975), p 270.

61. See chapter 6. All writers of the present century make reference to Baker's alleged community deficiencies.

62. For example, Michael Hanbury; see references in bibliography.

63. For example, Margaret Dorgan, "Augustine Baker, a Spiritual Leader of the English Counter-Reformation", *Word & Spirit*, No 7 (1985), who glances critically at Baker's understanding of the prayer of quiet; and Julian Stead, "Augustine Baker on the Holy Spirit", *Word & Spirit*, No 3 (1982).

64. For a brief biography, see Birt, pp 17f. Born in Brecknockshire in 1575, educated at Merchant Taylors' School, St John's College Oxford, Valladolid and the University of Salamanca, Jones held, among many successive responsibilities, the regius chair of Hebrew in the University of Douai. He died in London in 1635.

65. See 1876 edition, pp 554-560.

66. Page 556; cf my chapter 5, part II.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid p 559. I will look in detail at the issue of the feminine pronoun in chapter 5, part II.

69. 1876 edition, pp 7-26.

70. Ibid p 7.

71. See ch 4, note 104.

72. 1876 edition, p 24.

73. Ibid p 26.

74. See J. A. Wilson, *The Life of Bishop Hedley* (B & O, London, 1930). Hedley, born in 1837, became a monk of Ampleforth; he was made coadjutor bishop of the diocese of Newport and Menevia in 1873, subsequently succeeding.

75. Hedley's article was first published in *The Dublin Review*, Oct 1876, pp 337-367.

76. Ibid p 337.

77. Ibid p 349.

78. Ibid p 351.

79. Ibid p 362.

80. Ibid pp 355f.

81. Ibid pp 360f.

82. Ibid p 362.

83. Ibid pp 362f.

84. Ibid p 365.

85. Ibid p 357.

86. *The English Mystics* (BO & W, London, 1927), ch 7 and *The English Mystical Tradition* (B & O, London, 1961), ch 9.

87. 1927, p viii.

88. Ibid p 165.

89. Ibid p 171.

90. Ibid p 167.

91. 1961, p 175.

92. Ibid p 171.

93. Ibid p 160.

94. Ibid p 187.

95. See Dorgan (1985).

96. To my present knowledge, two books on Baker's spiritual teaching are currently being considered or worked upon, both intending to make use of the MSS. The authors are Maura Seé of Stanbrook Abbey and Victor de Waal, former dean of Canterbury. Neither, so far as I am aware, is dealing with Baker in a primarily critical way.

97. Low, p 141.

98. Ibid p 53.

99. Ibid p 7.

100. Ibid p 18, quoting Knowles.

101. Ibid p 89.

102. Ibid p 139.

103. See Low, p 132; also T. A. Birrell, "English Catholic Mystics in Non-Catholic Circles", two parts, *Downside Review*, Nos 314 & 315, (Jan 1976 and Apr 1976). Birrell traces in detail the influence of *Holy Wisdom* among non-Catholics down to the end of the 18th century.

104. She quotes *Holy Wisdom* several times in the course of her *Mysticism* (Methuen, London, 1911).

105. E. I. Watkin, *Poets and Mystics* (Sheed & Ward, London, 1953), p 235 and 236.

106. Knowles (1961), p 187.

107. Lunn (1980), p 217.

108. See Neil KcKenty, *In the Stillness Dancing: The Journey of John Main* (DLT, London, 1986). McKenty, referring to an incident in the 1970s when a young man in Washington DC came to Main for spiritual advice, quotes Main's own account: "I gave him Baker's *Holy Wisdom* as his book of study, thinking that this would keep him quietly occupied for several weeks, unravelling its loping Drydenesque sentences. To my amazement, however, he reacted with real and immediate enthusiasm, to such a degree that I felt I had to read it again myself" (p 79). Main would claim that "in Baker ... there is an intuitive understanding of the mantra" and would trace a tradition back through Baker to Cassian (p 80).

109. McCann, CRS 33, p x.

110. See Spearritt (1974), pp 310f. In addition, a direct link with Julian of Norwich has been established: see Owen and Bell (1989), pp 277f.

111. See appendix 2.

CHAPTER 3

1. HW, p 378.

2. It is interesting that modern discussions of spirituality often take for granted an incarnational stance. In his review of B. McGinn, J. Meyendorff & J. Leclercq, *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the 12th Century* (RKP, London, 1986), Anthony Meredith perceptively notes: "If there is a discernible and (?) intentional emphasis of this valuable work, it is the attempt to deplatonize spirituality" (*The Month* (Feb 1987), p 82). He points out the relative neglect of Origen in the book and concludes: "The attempt to offer a version of Christian spirituality which is both incarnational and socially relevant may be a form of apologetics, but it may end up by recommending a somewhat eviscerated version of the phenomenon it hopes to describe."
Lavinia Byrne makes a similar observation in her review of Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright & Edward Yarnold (eds), *The Study of Spirituality* (SPCK, London, 1986). She comments on the staidness of the

main part of the book and asks: "Where are the off-beat characters who serve to remind us that holiness is more than wholeness or even more than toeing a party line?" (*The Month* (Jan 1987), p 44).

3. Margaret Miles has also noted this point: "Theological writings exhibit neither the wealth of practical advice nor the blatantly dualistic, individualistic and privatistic focus that characterizes the literature of Christian devotion" (*The Image and Practice of Holiness* (SCM, London, 1989), p ix).

4. See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (A & C Black, London, 1968), p 141. Docetism claimed that Christ's manhood was unreal. "Clearly its ultimate roots were Graeco-Oriental assumptions about divine impassibility and the inherent impurity of matter ... it was an attitude that infected a number of heresies, particularly Marcionism and Gnosticism." With regard to Marcionism and Gnosticism see J. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius* (SPCK, London, 1968). He quotes Irenaeus with reference to the followers of the Gnostic Valentinus: "They deny that (the Saviour) assumed anything material, since indeed matter is incapable of salvation" (p 89), and Tertullian with reference to Marcion: Marcion held that "salvation will be the attainment only of those souls which had learned his doctrine; while the body, as having been taken from the earth, is incapable of sharing in salvation" (p 101).

5. Cf the following quotations, from Leo Sherley-Price's edition: "Only with reluctance would (the saints) provide for the needs of the body" (p 47); "Every bodily pleasure brings joy at first but at length it bites and destroys" (p 52); "The inner life of man is greatly hindered by the needs of the body" (p 55); "Doubly woe to those who love this miserable and corruptible life" (p 55). From *The Imitation of Christ* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973 [1952]). Baker translated some of the works of Thomas à Kempis: see p 61 of present thesis.

6. A further question, which cannot be dealt with in this thesis, is the extent to which the classic conciliar statements on Christology are themselves sufficiently incarnational in the ways in which I am developing that notion here.

7. One is reminded of the Catechism on which generations of Roman Catholic children were brought up: see questions 4-8.

8. *Church Dogmatics*, Vol 3, Pt 2 (T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1960), pp 380f.

9. For Orphism and Pythagoreanism, see W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol 1 (Cambridge UP, 1971), pp 150f, 198f; for the influence of Pythagoreanism on Plato see Guthrie, Vol 3, (Cambridge UP, 1975), p 32.

10. *Iliad*, xxiii, 100.

11. *Phaedo*, 70a, 80d. All Plato references are to Edith Hamilton & Huntington Cairns (eds), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Bollingen LXXI, Princeton UP, 1961).

12. 107a.

13. 80a.

14. 65d.

15. 66b.

16. 65b.

17. 67d.

18. 81d, cf *Phaedrus*, 250c.

19. 80b.

20. Cf the disputed dialogue *Greater Hippias*, 295c.

21. *Timaeus*, 87d seq.

22. *Republic*, 5.462d.

23. *Timaeus*, 34c.

24. *Laws*, 10.892a.

25. *Republic*, 5.462d, 9.585d.

26. See J. M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge UP, 1969).

27. See J. M. Rist, *Epicurus* (Cambridge UP, 1972).

28. R. T. Wallis, *Neo-Platonism* (Duckworth, London, 1972), p 9; Wallis quotes Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*.

29. A. H. Armstrong, *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge UP, 1967), p 229.

30. A. H. Armstrong and R. A. Markus, *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy* (DLT, London, 1960), p 44.

31. See note 4; also, E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (Cambridge UP, 1965), ch 2, and Hans Lietzmann, *A History of the Early Church*, Vols 1 & 2 (Lutterworth, London, 1967 [1961]), pp 270f.

32. H. W. Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (SCM, London, 1974).

33. Ibid pp 10f.

34. Ibid p 26.

35. G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, Vol 2 (Harvard UP, Cambridge, 1927), p 295; for further discussion, see Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (London, SCM, 1974), pp 196f.

Notes

36. D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London, SCM, 1964), p 145.

37. Cf G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol 7 (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1971), p 1057: "Even when one counts all the instances (of *σωμα*) in the Synoptic Gospels there are still only 51 as compared with 91 in Paul's Epistles. When the technical use for corpse or slave is omitted, the ratio is 91 to 33 in Paul's favour."

38. Ibid p 1057.

39. Ibid p 1060.

40. Hans Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (SCM, London, 1969), p 176.

41. Ibid p 178.

42. D. E. H. Whiteley, *The Theology of St Paul* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1974 [1964]), p 39.

43. Conzelmann (1969), p 179.

44. Whiteley (1974), p 44.

45. All references to the Rule are from Timothy Fry (ed), *RB 1980: The Rule of St Benedict* (Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1981); the present reference is ch 73:8, p 297.

46. Ibid p 91.

47. See Adalbert de Vogüé and Jean Neufville, *La Règle de Saint Benoît*, Vol 2 (Cerf, Paris, 1972), p 708.

48. Ch 61:6, pp 274f.

49. Respectively, ch 4:11, p 183, quoting 1 Cor 9:27; ch 57:5, p 265, referring to Acts 5:1-11; chs 33:4, p 231 & 58:25, pp 269f, alluding to 1 Cor 7:4.

50. Respectively, ch 53:7, p 257; ch 7:62, p 201.

51. Ch 72:5, p 295.

52. Ch 7:8-9, p 193.

53. De Vogüé & Neufville, Vol 2, p 691.

54. Ch 2:31, 33, 34, 37, 38, pp 177f - all in the chapter on the qualities of the abbot; ch 31:8, p 229; ch 41:5, p 241 etc.

55. Respectively, ch 2:29, p 177, quoting Prov 23:14; ch 7:4, p 192, quoting Ps 130 (131):2.

Notes

56. Ch 27:6, pp 224f; he means spiritually sick.

57. See ch 5, section II.

58. Cf RB 80, p 95: "The Rule offers no theories about the life of prayer."

59. Ibid p 578.

60. Ch 52:4, p 255.

61, See ch 4.

62. Respectively, ch 53:7, 15, pp 257, 259; ch 36:1, p 235; ch 2:2 & ch 63:13, pp 173 & 279.

63. *The Substance of the Rule of St Benedict*, p 1.

64. Ibid p 2.

65. ST 1a, 75-83, Prologue, p 3, quoted from Timothy Suttor (ed), Blackfriars edition, Vol 11 (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1970).

66. ST 1a, 75, 4 (p 19).

67. Ibid p 19, footnote c).

68. ST 1a, 75, 7 (p 37).

69. ST 1a, 76, 1 (p 43).

70. ST 1a, 76, 1 (p 49).

71. Ibid p 2, footnote a).

72. Ibid p xvi.

73. The second Vatican Council ended in 1965, but its thinking has remained an inspiration for Catholic as well as for more general Christian thought; the latest assessment of *Gaudium et Spes* is by Enda McDonagh, published in Adrian Hastings (ed), *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After* (SPCK, London, 1991), pp 96-112. McDonagh argues that "twenty-five years on it is still a powerful and inspiring document" (p 110) despite limitations with regard to some of the specific topics with which it attempted to deal. Nevertheless, "its influence has depended not on its precise analysis or formulations, but on the direction and concern it so clearly indicated." (ibid)

74. All quotations from Austin Flannery (ed), *Vatican Council II: the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Fowler Wright, Leominster, 1980 [1975]); present reference, art 2, p 904.

75. Quoted in Adrian Hastings, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of the Second Vatican Council*, Vol 2 (DLT, London, 1969), p 16.

76. GS art 3, p 904. I have retained the term "man" when quoting directly from the 1960s translation.

77. In Herbert Vorgrimler (ed), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Vol 5 (B & O, London and Herder, New York, 1969), p 71.

78. Ibid p 119.

79. Ibid p 126.

80. Ratzinger in Vorgrimler, p 129.

81. GS art 1, p 903.

82. GS art 25, p 926. The document explicitly alludes to Aquinas, *I Ethic.*, Lect 1.

83. GS art 32, pp 931f.

84. Hastings (1991), p 102.

85. McDonagh argues that the Council would have achieved a more complete anthropology if it had recognized even more "that the person may only be person as person-in-relationships-in-structures, as person-in-community ..." (ibid).

86. See, for example, Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII* (Chapman, London, 1971), p 4.

87. Jn 1:3; cf Col 1:15f and the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed.

88. Brown, p cxxii.

89. Prov 8:29f.

90. Wis 7:24.

91. Rom 8:21; this is a theme echoed in the writings of Teilhard de Chardin.

92. DS 800, "*Creator ... utramque de nihilo condidit creaturam, spiritualem et corporalem ...*"

93. Vatican I quotes Lateran IV, see DS 3002.

94. GS art 12, p 914.

95. HW, p 3.

96. Robert Butterworth, *The Theology of Creation* (Mercier, Cork, 1969), p 16.

97. Ernest Evans (ed), *Tertullian's Treatise on the Resurrection* (SPCK, London, 1960), p 19 (ch 6).

98. Cf Enda McDonagh in Hastings (1991). Referring to GS he writes "its openness to the world of its time built on ... the pioneering theological work of ... Rahner ..." (p 96).

99. Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol 17 (DLT, London, 1981), "The Body in the Order of Salvation", p 75.

100. *Theological Investigations*, Vol 6 (London, 1969), "The Unity of Spirit and Matter in Christian Faith", p 160.

101. Thomas V. Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Cornell UP, Ithaca, 1986), p 142.

102. Ibid pp 62f.

103. GS art 22, pp 922f.

104. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol 3, Pt 2, p 347.

105. *Theological Investigations*, Vol 6, p 169.

106. Evans (1960), p 24 (ch 8).

107. Ibid p 25.

108. See, for example, ST 1a, 75, 7 (Blackfriars, London, 1970), p 37: "the soul in a certain fashion demands the body in order to act." See also ST, 1a, 76; John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* (SCM, London, 1971 [1966]), p 65 and, from a rather different starting-point, Antony Flew, *The Presumption of Atheism* (Elek/Pemberton, London, 1976), pp 110f.

109. Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.

110. See note 106.

111. 1 Cor 12:27, cf Rom 12:5.

112. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol 1 (Nisbet, Welwyn, 1968 [1951]), p 265.

113. Col 1:18, cf 2:9.

114. Eph 5:23f.

115. *Lumen Gentium*, art 1, p 350.

116. GS, arts 13 & 14, pp 914f.

117. See present chapter, end of section 1).

118. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1985), p 235.

119. A. Kosnik et al (eds), *Human Sexuality: New Directions in Catholic Thought* (Search Press, London, 1977), p 1.

120. Ibid p 86.

121. Ibid p 82.

122. "The Integrative Power of Religion", *Review for Religious*, Vol 42, Pt 3 (May/Jun 1983), p 416.

123. "Psychotherapy: The Healing of the Mind", *Review for Religious*, Vol 41, Pt 2 (Mar/Apr 1982), p 272.

124. *Being Human* (Chapman, London, 1984), p 91.

125. Ibid p 106.

126. "Spiritual Friendship", *The Way*, Supplement 10 (Sum 1970), p 71, quoting *De Veritate* 26, 7 ad 7.

127. "The God of the Scriptures: an Invitation to Passionate Prayer", *Review for Religious*, Vol 48, Pt 5 (Sep/Oct 1989), p 651.

128. William F Kraft, "Negative Feelings Can Foster Positive Growth", *Review for Religious*, Vol 42, Pt 2 (Mar/Apr 1983), p 253.

129. Pannenberg (1985), p 265.

130. Quoted by Peter Brown, *The Body & Society* (Faber, London, 1989), p 31.

131. GS art 2, p 904.

132. Cf GS art 22, pp 922f.

133. GS art 12, p 913.

134. *Theological Investigations*, Vol 2 (DLT, London, 1963), "The Resurrection of the Body", p 206.

CHAPTER 4

1. HW p 21.

2. Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford UP, 1985), p 15.

3. Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (SCM, London, 1983), p 15.

4. On the relationship between model and metaphor see Soskice, p 55. There can be models which are not metaphors, eg physical models. For our purposes, however, the distinction between model and metaphor need

not be of concern because we are dealing with language. In the context of the present chapter the conflict model is a broad way of looking at the spiritual life based on a widespread and varied use of conflict metaphors.

5. Eg R. B. Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation* (Cambridge UP, 1968 [1953]), p 92: "There are great advantages in thinking about a scientific theory through the medium of thinking about a model for it." Also, Ian T. Ramsey, *Models and Mystery* (Oxford UP, 1964), ch 1, "Models in the natural sciences and in theology"; Soskice, ch 6; McFague, ch 3.

6. Eg Ramsey, ibid, also *Models for Divine Activity* (SCM, London, 1973), *Christian Empiricism* (Sheldon, London, 1974); Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1976); McFague, ch 4.

7. *Models and Mystery*, passim.

8. Op cit p 180. Although Dulles is primarily concerned with ecclesiology his comments have relevance in other areas of theology.

9. See eg Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1978).

10. On the Holy War, see eg Walther Zimmerli, *The Old Testament and the World* (SPCK, London, 1976), pp 57f.

11. See eg Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol 1, (SCM, London, 1964 [1961]), pp 139f; Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol 1 (Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, 1962), p 17.

12. Eichrodt, op cit Vol 2 (SCM, London, 1967), p 324.

13. Ibid p 329.

14. Chaim Herzog and Mordechai Gichon, *Battles of the Bible* (Book Club Associates, London, 1978), p 14.

15. Even St Benedict, a frequent authority for Baker, recognizes that the Old Testament needs to be used with discernment: in advising his monks what to read at night he says, "but not the Heptateuch or the Books of Kings, because it will not be good for those of weak understanding to hear these writings at that hour" (RB 80, ch 42:4, p 243).

16. For general remarks on the cursing psalms, see eg S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, Vol 2 (Blackwell, Oxford, 1962), ch XI.

17. See eg Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (DLT, London, 1961), ch 4. Standard histories are Martin Noth, *The History of Israel* (A & C Black, London, 1965 [1958]) and John Bright, *A History of Israel* (SCM, London, 1966 [1960]).

18. Eg Is 49:15, Hos 11:1f.

19. Eg Song of Songs.

20. For Marcion, see Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967), pp 38f; J. Stevenson (ed), *A New Eusebius* (SPCK, London, 1968), passim.

21. As an example of the pagan use of allegory, Origen quotes Celsus' reference to Homer; see Henry Chadwick (ed), *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge UP, 1980 [1953]), ch 42 (pp 357f).

22. See David Winston, *Philo of Alexandria* (Paulist Press, New York, 1981).

23. Nicholas de Lange, *Origen and the Jews* (Cambridge UP, 1976); Joseph Wilson Trigg, *Origen* (SCM, London, 1985 [1983]).

24. Op cit p 120.

25. For a positive modern discussion of allegory, see Andrew Louth, *Discerning the Mystery: an Essay on the Nature of Theology* (Oxford UP, 1983), pp 96f.

26. An obvious example is his favourable quotation of Hilton's parable of a pilgrim (I, 1, 6); see note 98.

27. Trigg, p 125.

28. See eg 1 Pet 2:13, 17; Mk 12:17; Tit 3:1; 1 Tim 6:1; Eph 6:5.

29. See eg Lk 21:12, Jn 16:2; also Rev.

30. See eg Mt 10:34f, 19:29.

31. Chapter 2 section e).

32. See *Oxford English Dictionary*, entry "flesh".

33. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology" in *Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Chapman, London, 1969), p 820.

34. Rom 7:15, 18.

35. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, Vol 1 (SCM, London, 1968 [1952]), p 191.

36. See chapter 2, section e).

37. On the evil imagination see N. P. Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin* (Longman, Green & Co, London, 1927).

38. A. Vanneste, "La Préhistoire du décret du Concile de Trente sur le peché originel", *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, Vol 86, No 5 (May 1964), pp 357f.

39. *In Rom.* 4, 7, quoted by Vanneste, p 360.

40. DS 792.

41. See eg P. Kline, *Fact and Fantasy in Freudian Theory* (Methuen, London, 1972).

42. See eg E. Storr (ed), *Jung: Selected Writings* (Fontana, London, 1983).

43. See note 37.

44. ST 1a2ae 30, 1, quoted in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Vol 2 (Beauchesne, Paris, 1937), p 1347. Some of the material that follows comes from the *Dictionnaire* article, "Concupiscence", by Charles Baumgartner.

45. Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol 1 (DLT, London, 1961), "The Theological Concept of Concupiscentia", pp 352f.

46. *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, p 1347.

47. Leo Scheffczyk, "Concupiscence", in *Sacramentum Mundi*, Vol 1 (B & O, London, 1968), p 403.

48. Ibid p 404.

49. See chapter 3, section n).

50. *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Vol 1 (Beauchesne, Paris, 1937), p 235.

51. ST 1a2ae 22-30, Blackfriars edition, Vol 19 (London, 1967), pp xxif.

52. 1a2ae 59, 1.

53. 2a2ae 58, 9.

54. 1a2ae 24, 3.

55. F. H. Sandbach, *The Stoics* (Chatto & Windus, London, 1975), p 63; J. M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge UP, 1969), p 26.

56. Rist, p 26.

57. Sandbach, p 62.

58. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol 1, pp 15f.

59. Timothy Suttor (ed) in ST, Blackfriars edition, Vol 11, p 271.

60. Rahner finds such a doctrine in the writings of Origen and traces its development into the modern period: see *Theological Investigations*, Vol 16 (DLT, London, 1979), "The 'Spiritual Senses' according to Origen" and "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages". Interestingly, he finds this teaching in Harphius and Blosius, important authorities for Baker (p 130).

61. For further comments, see chapter 5, section o).

62. Henry Herp, d 1477.

63. Present chapter, section k).

64. Chapter 5, section h).

65. His positive view of spirit will be discussed in ch 5, part III.

66. Chapter 5, section e).

67. Charles Davis, *Body as Spirit* (H & S, London, 1976).

68. DS, C, 7e.

69. Ernest Evans (ed), *St Augustine's Enchiridion* (SPCK, London, 1953), p 25 (ch 27); see also note p 116. Other references to *massa damnata* and similar concepts are given in Louis A. Arand (ed), *St Augustine: Faith, Hope and Charity* (Newman Bookshop, Westminster, Maryland, 1947), p 122, note 65.

70. See feminist analysis generally, eg, Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature* (Women's Press, London, 1984 [1978]).

71. Brown (1989), eg pp 26, 34, 39, 112.

72. Council of Orange II, see DS 383.

73. Council of Trent, see DS 1511.

74. How far *The Cloud* suggests a disparagement of creatures remains debatable; see eg James Walsh (1981), p xv.

75. Kittel, Vol III (1965), p 893. For a discussion of the use of this crucial word in GS, see, eg, Hastings (1969), pp 22f.

76. See J. B. Bauer, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, Vol 3 (Sheed & Ward, London, 1970), p 808.

77. For patristic references to the devil, see M. J. Rouet de Journel, *Enchiridion Patristicum* (Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1956), "Index theologicus", 210, 413, 420.

78. See, for instance, Armand Veilleux (ed), *Pachomian Koinonia*, Vol 3 (Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, 1982), p 39; Léon Cristiani, *La Spiritualité du Désert: Cassien*, Vol 2 (Editions de Fontenelle, St Wandrille, 1946), pp 135f; Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (T & H, London, 1971), pp 53f, 101f, and *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Faber, London, 1982), pp 123f.

79. In Evagrius, for example; see John Eudes Bamberger (ed), *Evagrius Ponticus, The Praktikos* (Cistercian Publications, Spencer, 1970), pp 3f; cf "Evagrius is well aware of the distinction between the demons and the passions" (p 8).

80. RB 80, p 622.

81. DS, C 1ab.

82. Ibid C 2cb, D 1a.

83. Ibid D 2c.

84. Cf Rom 8:26.

85. On p 1 Baker quotes St Bernard; cf Rom 5:5.

86. Cf Council of Trent on justification, DS 1561.

87. See chapter 1, part II and chapter 2, section m).

88. Antony Low (1970), p 116.

89. Eg *Merchant of Venice*, Act II, scene 2.

90. Cf Edward Yarnold, *The Second Gift* (St Paul's Publications, Slough, 1974).

91. Aristotle is a witness; see W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol 6 (Cambridge UP, 1981), pp 396f. For Aristotle, *theoria* is "the pleasantest and best activity" (p 260). Theoria of Greek philosophy is not exactly the same as Christian "contemplation", although the *theoria* language is used by Christian writers.

92. For a detailed discussion of this in Augustine, Gregory and Bernard, see Cuthbert Butler, *Western Mysticism* (Constable, London, 1922), pp 195f. For a comment on the development of the distinction among Dionysians, see James Walsh (ed), *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Paulist Press, New York, 1981), pp 61f.

93. See eg chs XVIIf.

94. See *Secretum*, which sees the move towards passive contemplation as the way of perfection, and *Commentary*, where the position adopted by *The Cloud* is re-affirmed.

95. See chs XVII, XVIII.

96. Cf 59, where actives are discouraged from meddling in contemplative matters.

97. See chapter 1, section f) and chapter 6, section n).

98. Hilton, bk 2, ch 21. This parable is quoted in full. It is an allegory of the pilgrim soul journeying to Jerusalem, spurred on by love of Jesus to overcome all difficulties. It is characterized by a warm devotion which contrasts with the style of the rest of *Holy Wisdom*, although it presumes an anthropology similar to Baker's and has a considerable amount of conflict imagery.

99. Eg "*currītur via mandatorum Dei*" (Prol 49, p 166); *"Ad maiorem ... doctrinae virtutumque culmina ... pervenies"* (ch 73:9, p 296), and others.

100. The last probably taken from Barbanson's *Secrets Sentiers*.

101. García Colombás, "The Ancient Concept of the Monastic Life" in *Monastic Studies*, Epiphany 1964, p 78.

102. Ibid p 79.

103. See RB 80, note on Prologue 3: "Military metaphors for the spiritual life recur throughout RB, both in borrowings from RM and in original passages and are indeed a commonplace already in the New Testament ... and in Hellenistic philosophy" (p 158); the combat here is against the devil and vices (p 581).

104. Juan de Castaniza OSB, *The Spiritual Conflict and Conquest* (BO & W, London, 1874). The editor of this edition is Canon Vaughan OSB. The first English edition of the work was produced in 1598. Vaughan argues in his preface that it was very popular among the early members of the restored EBC, Baker's contemporaries. Strangely, however, I can find no reference in *Holy Wisdom* to Castaniza or to his works (but see chapter 2, section g) with regard to Cressy).
The real author of *The Spiritual Conflict and Conquest* is not Castaniza, in fact, but Lorenzo Scupoli; although not referred to in *Holy Wisdom*, Baker certainly knew it and quoted it favourably (see P. Spearritt (1975), p 37). A recently published article quotes a translation by Baker of a passage from Suso in which the prevailing image is warfare (Owen & Bell (1989), pp 281f).

105. See especially chapter 5, section h).

CHAPTER 5

1. HW, p 280.

2. For a summary of the medieval notion, see, eg Brian Stone, *Chaucer: A Critical Study* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1987), ch 15.

3. DS 462.

4. *Phaedrus* 250c, cf *Phaedo* 81f and *Cratylus* 400c where he attributes the belief to "Orphic poets".

5. Cf DS 5, 10, 11, 12 etc.

6. Cf Acts 17:32.

7. Cf for instance, G. W. Butterworth (ed), *Origen: On First Principles* (SPCK, London, 1936), 4.4.10, p 327.

8. See G. W. H. Lampe (ed), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford UP, 1978 [1961]), *σωμα*, pp 1362f.

9. Eg Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (eds): Methodius, Second Discourse on the Resurrection" in *The Works of Methodius etc* (T & T CLark, Edinburgh, 1874).

10. DS 403.

11. P, p 66.

12. See Margaret Miles' general remarks about suffering and devotion in *The Image and Practice of Holiness* (SCM, London, 1989), pp 173f; she warns, however, of the danger of an attitude that overvalues pain and suffering.

13. B. Shlemon, D. Linn and M. Linn, *To Heal as Jesus Healed* (Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, 1978), pp 55f.

14. DS 1696, quoted by Paul VI, apostolic constitution: *The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick* (Nov 30th 1972); see *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum* (Chapman, London, 1983), p 6.

15. Introduction to the interim translation of *The Rite of Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick* (Liturgical Books, Dolmen, Dublin, 1974), p 16.

16. ST 1a, 50, 1.

17. Ibid 1a, 51, 1.

18. Heb 2:5, 10.

19. Among the early monks an angelic condition was something desirable. See, eg A.-J. Festugière, *Les Moines D'Orient*, Vol IV/1, "*Enquête sur les Moines d'Egypte (Historia Monachorum in Egypto)*" (Cerf, Paris, 1964): Abbâ Or was "*d'apparence tout angélique*" (p 29); of Abbâ Bès, "*son maintien tout angélique*" (p 36); of the holy man Théon: "*On pouvait le voir le visage tout angélique*" (p 42). Interestingly, the angelic aspect was sometimes linked with a transfigured bodily appearance: eg, in the *Vie de Saint Euthyme: "Il avait l'air d'un ange ... Pour ce qui est de l'aspect corporel, son visage était rond, brillant, blanc, avec des yeux perçants ..."* Festugière, *Les Moines D'Orient*, Vol III/1, *"Les Moines de Palestine, Cyrille de Scythopolis: Vie de Saint Euthyme"* (Cerf, Paris, 1962), p 113). However, even a favourable commentator concedes that "the caricature of the monk as a world-hater (is) unfortunately often supported by evidence from monastic literature itself" (Columba Stewart, *The World of the Desert Fathers* (Fairacres, Oxford, 1986), p 6).

Specifically on the link between the treatment of the body and angelism: "To combat temptations some stood naked in cold wells or rolled in the thorn bushes. Ideally, the monk should aim for an angelic apathy in which his sexual passions would be completely dead to any stimulation". (James A. Mohler, *The Heresy of Monasticism* (Alba House,

New York, 1970), p 73). If the *Dialogues* of St Gregory are to be believed even Benedict, the moderate patriarch of western monasticism indulged in naked thorn-rolling to subdue sexual urges (PL 66, col 132). The desirability of quasi-angelic sexlessness is found in Theodoret (c. 393-c. 460): "*Il est un point toutefois où les moines se rapprocheront vraiement des anges, c'est gardant la virginité. Les anges n'ont pas de sexes ... Là réside leur sainteté*" (Pierre Canivet: "Théodoret et le monachisme syrien avant le concile de Chalcédoine" in *Théologie de la Vie Monastique* (Aubier, Ligugé, 1961), p 254).

20. Vol 11 (Blackfriars, London, 1970) p xvi; see also my comments in chapter 3, section g).

21. Ibid pp 18f (ST Ia, 75, 4).

22. Ibid p 49 (ST 1a, 76, 1).

23. Council of Vienne, AD 1312, DS 902.

24. DS 1440, 2828.

25. I have been able to find only one place where a soul is referred to with the masculine pronoun: Baker has been talking at length about the young beginner in the monastic life *(he)*, then he suddenly shifts to "soul": "Whereas, if a good foundation of spiritual prayer were once laid, such a soul, by being applied to *his* studies or external offices ..." (154).

26. It is interesting to note that in the *Cloud of Unknowing* one chapter is headed "In this exercise a soul is absolved of *his* particular sins ..." (ch xxiii) and another "How a soul must dispose itself to suppress all awareness ..." (ch xliv). As far as I can tell there is no use in this work of the feminine pronoun.

27. *Animus* also exists, but it is used in the Vulgate far less frequently than *anima* (1⅛ columns to *anima*'s ten in F. P. Dutripon, *Vulgatae Editionis Bibliorum Sacrorum Concordantiae* (Bloud & Barral, Paris, 9th edition, nd) and only occasionally to mean "soul".

28. The suggestion that the feminine implies passivity before a divine initiative is not, to the best of my knowledge, found in *Holy Wisdom*. It would be wrong, however, to dismiss it as an anachronistic idea. Contemporaneous witnesses include St John of the Cross (1542-91) and John Donne (1572-1631). The former writes in the first person singular of the soul, the *amada:*

> Oh noche, que junaste
> amado con amada,
> amada en el Amado transformada!

and proceeds with erotic imagery: "And I caressed him/ In breezes from the fan of cedars blown" (Gerald Brenan, *St John of the Cross: His Life and Poetry* (Cambridge UP, 1973), pp 145f). John Donne writes in one of his "divine meditations":

> Yet dearly'I love you, and would be loved fain,
> But am betrothed unto your enemy,

Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I
Except you enthral me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

(A. J. Smith (ed), *John Donne: The Complete English Poems* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1971), pp 314f). Both these witnesses are, of course, men.

29. With reference to a section of the Baker MS *Book D*, Placid Spearritt suggests that the scribe of Ampleforth MS 49, Dom Benedict Preston, "tries to change the pronouns for the soul from masculine to feminine" ("A Baker Centenary", *Ampleforth Journal*, Vol LXXX, Pt III (Aut 1975), p 36); even if this is correct, Baker MSS written by other scribes use "she" (eg *De Conversatione Morum*, copied in 1694, in Douai Abbey library and *The Substance of the Rule of St Bennet*, written by Leander Prichard in 1650 (Stanbrook, 1981)). Baker himself may not have been consistent, but my point is not altered: *Holy Wisdom* and a substantial body of spiritual literature do use "she".

30. Cf section e) of present chapter.

31. A similar distinction is made explicit at the opening of Blosius' *A Book of Spiritual Instruction:*

> 1. The one rational soul may be considered in three ways, and is therefore called by three names.
> 2. It is called *anima*, soul, if it is considered as to its exterior and interior senses, and sensitive appetite or desire.
> 3. It is called *spiritus*, spirit, if it is considered in its rational powers: memory, intellect and will.
> 4. It is called *mens*, mind, or the apex of the mind, if looked at in its essence, as the image of God and turned to him.
> 5. Often, however, the different names are used indiscriminately.

(Ludovicus Blosius, *A Book of Spiritual Instruction* (B & O, London, 1955 [1900]), p 1, (edited by a Benedictine of Stanbrook).

32. Cf ST 1a, 78-80.

33. A parallel to this way of talking is found in Julian of Norwich: eg "And these two parts were in Christ, the higher and the lower, which are only one soul. The higher part was always at peace with God in full joy and bliss. The lower part, which is sensuality, suffered for the salvation of mankind." (Edmund Colledge and James Walsh (eds), *Julian of Norwich: Showings* (Paulist Press, New York, 1978), ch 55, p 288). There is no reference to Julian in *Holy Wisdom*, as far as I can discover, and she does not feature among Baker's formal translations (see Placid Spearritt in *American Benedictine Review* (Sept 1974) pp 310f). However, he did know and translate her: a section of her *Showings* appears in the MS called "The Upholland Anthology" (see Owen and Bell (1989), pp 277f). *Showings* became known to the reading public in the 1670 edition of Serenus Cressy (Colledge and Walsh, p 17) and "we owe the preservation of the long text to the piety and learning of Augustine Baker and his spiritual school" (ibid p 22).

34. See section o) for further comments.

Notes

35. See section e).

36. What Paul says on this subject is, admittedly, complex and not entirely consistent.

37. *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Vol 1, *Ame*, gives an historical summary of the use of the concept.

38. Ibid col 452.

39. P, pp 132-135.

40. P, p 134.

41. *Dictionnaire*, col 461.

42. Ibid col 463.

43. Ibid col 466.

44. Frank Tobin, *Meister Eckhart: Thought and Language* (Philadelphia UP, 1986), pp 126f. Tobin lists the relevant literature on the subject.

45. Ibid p 127.

46. Ibid pp 138f.

47. Cf "The interior part draws the exterior by grace, and both will be eternally united in bliss through the power of Christ" (Colledge & Walsh (eds), p 213).

48. Maria Shrady and Josef Schmidt (eds), *Tauler: Sermons* (Paulist Press, New York, 1985), sermon 1 on Christmas, p 37.

49. ST 1a, 77-83.

50. Timothy Suttor (ed), ST Vol 11, p 272.

51. See Low (1970) for a simplified comment on this, pp 75-79.

52. Cf section l) of present chapter.

53. *Commentary*, p 210.

54. Ibid p 211.

55. *Of Finding*, p 31.

56. Low, p 78.

57. Cf ST 1a, 78, 4: "Fantasy or imagination is, as it were, a treasure store of forms received through the senses" (Blackfriars, Vol 11, p 139).

Notes

58. See chapter 6, section i) for a more detailed discussion.

59. His attitude towards the imagination is shared by some of his precursors. For example, Tauler in sermon 37 (Shrady & Schmidt (eds), p 126), *The Cloud* (chs iv and ix) and John of the Cross (eg *The Ascent of Mt Carmel*, bk 2, ch 4, para 4 in Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (eds), *The Collected Works of St John of the Cross* (ICS, Washington, 1979), p 113).

60. ST 1a, 75, 6 (Blackfriars, Vol 11, p 29).

61. ST 1a, 82, 4 (Vol 11, p 227).

62. ST 1a, 79, 8 (Vol 11, p 175).

63. Here, of course, he takes sides in the scholastic debate as to whether the intellect or the will is primary in the experience of beatitude. The Dominican school defended the primacy of the intellect's union with God in contemplation. See, eg Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn (eds), *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises and Defense* (Paulist Press, New York, 1981), "Theological Summary", p 56.

64. Ch lxiii.

65. *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Paulist Press, New York, 1981), p 92.

66. Justin McCann (ed), *The Cloud of Unknowing* (B & O, London, 1924 [1947]), note, p 80.

67. Ibid p 210.

68. Interestingly, the Oxford English Dictionary records no use of the word "mentality" in this sense prior to 1691, but it is definitely used in *Holy Wisdom* in 1657 and presumably in Baker's writings before his death in 1641.

69. ST 1a, 75, 2 (Blackfriars, Vol 11, p 11).

70. See, eg Low on inspiration and obedience, pp 96f.

CHAPTER 6

1. HW, p 106.

2. *De controversiis*, tom 2, lib 3, cap 2 (Naples, 1857); quoted in Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, p 31.

3. See chapter 4, footnote 98.

4. Cf Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God* (Sheed & Ward, London, 1963). See also *Lumen Gentium:* "The Church ... is in the nature of sacrament ..." (art 1, p 350).

5. DS 1310.

6. DS 1601.

7. Justin McCann and Columba Cary-Elwes (eds), *Ampleforth and Its Origins* (B & O, London, 1952), p 162.

8. Cf Michael Hanbury, "Fr Baker and the Liturgy" in *Liturgy*, No 82 (Apr 1950), pp 38-44; on the divine office, E. I. Watkin, *Poets and Mystics* (B & O, London, 1953), p 233.

9. See, for instance, *Dialogues*, bk 1, introduction; *Homilies on Ezekiel*, Vol 1, hom 11, section 6 (PL 77, col 149f & PL 76, col 908).

10. DS 1725.

11. DS 813.

12. See chapter 1, section f).

13. See present chapter, section c).

14. See Anthony Levi on St Francis de Sales in James Walsh (ed), *Spirituality through the Centuries* (B & O, London, 1964), p 271: "The teaching itself is classical - mental prayer, frequent communion, the sacraments ..."

15. Henry Benedict Mackey (ed), *Treatise on the Love of God* (B & O, London, 1884), p xix.

16. Published in 1551; the quotation is from the English edition, *A Book of Spiritual Instruction*, edited by a Benedictine of Stanbrook (B & O, London, 1955 [trans. 1900]).

17. Op cit p 48.

18. See The Rule, chs 8-19.

19. A. Wikenhauser, *Pauline Mysticism* (Herder, Edinburgh-London, 1960). Even if we question Wikenhauser's use of the word "mystical", as several writers have done, there is no denying the warm intimacy of "the close union of Christ and the Christian" in Pauline theology; see J. Fitzmyer in *Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Chapman, London, 1969), "Pauline Theology", p 823. Fitzmyer gives a balanced summary of the issues.

20. See appendix 2.

21. *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Vol 1 (Beauchesne, Paris, 1937), col 1733.

22. See Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (James Clarke, Cambridge, 1957), pp 23f; also David Knowles, "The Influence of Pseudo-Dionysius on Western Mysticism" in Peter Brooks (ed), *Christian Spirituality: Essays in honour of Gordon Rupp* (SCM, London, 1975), pp 80f.

23. Lossky, pp 34f.

24. Lossky, p 26.

25. *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Oxford UP, 1981), p 178.

26. In James Walsh (ed), *The Pursuit of Wisdom and Other Works, by the Author of The Cloud of Unknowing* (Paulist Press, New York, 1988), p 8.

27. See chapter 4, footnote 98.

28. See Gerard Sitwell (ed), *The Scale of Perfection* (B & O, London, 1953), p xv.

29. See, eg Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Faber, London, 1967), pp 299f; Aelred Squire, *Aelred of Rievaulx* (SPCK, London, 1969), pp 98f. Also, Brian Bethune, "Aelred of Rievaulx & Human Relationships", *Cistercian Studies*, Vol XX (1985/2); Maria Josephine McErlane, "Friendship according to St Augustine", *Review for Religious*, Vol 41, No 4 (Jul/Aug 1982); Brian Patrick McGuire, "Looking back on Friendship: Medieval Experience & Modern Context", *Cistercian Studies*, Vol XXI (1986/2); Richard Wanner, "Aelred of Rievaulx: Twelfth Century Answers to Twentieth Century Questions", *Review for Religious*, Vol 46, No 6 (Nov/Dec 1987).

30. Robert Murray, "Spiritual Friendship", *The Way*, suppt 10 (Sum 1970), p 71, quoting *De Veritate*, 26, 7 ad 7.

31. Mk 1:17.

32. Lk 11:1.

33. See, eg Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority and the Church* (Oxford UP, 1978), pt I, section II; Benedicta Ward (ed), *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Mowbray, Oxford, 1975).

34. Prologue 1, p 157.

35. See Low, ch 5.

36. For the abbot or abbess in the monastic tradition, see, eg Adalbert de Vogüé, *Community and Abbot in the Rule of St Benedict*, Vol 1 (Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, 1979); Pierre Salmon, *The Abbot in the Monastic Tradition* (Cistercian Publications, Washington, 1972).

37. RB 80, ch 2:2, p 173.

38. RB 80, ch 7:44f, 5th step of humility, p 199.

39. ST 1a, 92, 1, see Blackfriars edition, vol 13

40. See appendix 2 for references to individual women.

41. See appendix 2.

42. Contrast eg the rich feminine imagery in Julian of Norwich, where Jesus is the mother (eg Long text, Ch 58, Colledge & Walsh (1978), pp 293f).

43. *The Body and Society*, p 243.

44. *The Image and Practice of Holiness*, p 38.

45. Miles, p 100; cf also Brown, pp 26, 34; Brown traces the attitude in eg Ambrose (pp 348f). For Gregory of Nyss on the Eastern side, see Miles, p 77 and note.

46. Cf eg his *Inner Life and Writings of Dame Gertrude More*, 2 vols (Washbourne, London, 1910), edited by Benedict Weld-Blundell.

47. A contemporary who seems to have had a more positive view is Francis de Sales, many of whose letters were addressed to women whom he "preferred ... as he said, to be endowed with vigorous spirits and independent minds" (Anthony Levi in James Walsh (ed), *Spirituality through the Centuries*, p 268).

48. See eg Henry Chadwick (ed), *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge UP, 1965 [1953]). Celsus objected to the novelty of Christianity (II, 4; VI, 10; VIII, 12), the arbitrary timing of the coming of Jesus (II, 30) and the geographical particularity (VI, 78).

49. In Vorgrimler (ed), p 82.

50. See chapter 3, section 1).

51. GS art 12, p 913.

52. *The Image and Practice of Holiness*, p ix.

53. Cf Karl Rahner, "The Body as Symbol of Man", *Theological Investigations*, Vol 4 (DLT, London, 1966).

CHAPTER 7

1. Serenus Cressy, "A preface to the reader", *Sancta Sophia* (1657), p xl.

2. GS art 13, p 914.

3. *The Image and Practice of Holiness*, p 176.

Notes

4. I recently found a similar position being argued from the perspective of Wittgenstein's philosophy: see Fergus Kerr, *Theology after Wittgenstein* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1986).

APPENDIX 1

SOURCES FOR A BIOGRAPHY OF BAKER

The would-be biographer of Baker is singularly well-served with primary sources. There are three published autobiographical works: i) a discussion of his spiritual development found in the MS treatise *Secretum sive Mysticum* (1629), ii) the *Rythms* (1636), a collection of some thirty-five rough stanzas, and iii) an unfinished prose autobiography that ends about 1596 (1637-38). The first was published in an abbreviated form, edited by Justin McCann, as *The Confessions of Venerable Father Augustine Baker* (London, 1922) and the second and third, edited by Justin McCann and Hugh Connolly, in *Memorials of Fr Augustine Baker* (Catholic Record Society 33, London, 1933).

Alongside these there are biographies by Baker's friends and disciples, Leander Prichard (1643, published in CRS 33) and Peter Salvin (1646), and by his editor, Serenus Cressy (1657). The Salvin and Cressy biographies have been published in a single volume by Justin McCann, *The Life of Father Augustine Baker* (London, 1933). In addition there is a fragment of a biography in MS by Dame Clementia Cary, (c 1650, see note on this is Placid Spearritt (1974) p 290).

All the biographers had privileged knowledge of their subject. Leander Prichard, also from Monmouthshire and possibly a kinsman of Baker (see CRS 33, footnote p 6), must have been born around 1605. In spring 1620 Baker took him as his companion (P, p 103) and placed him in a school near London (P, p 104). By 1624 Prichard, "a young monk newly professed" was at St Gregory's, Douai, acting as Baker's secretary and personal assistant (P, p 116). He was not with Baker during the Cambrai years, but describes how

helpful he had found Baker's spiritual teaching (P, p 117). He looked after the older monk on his return to Douai, but was then sent to England (P p 120). Returning from England, Prichard began to gather information for a life of Baker (P, p 124). It was now the mid 1630s and he had been Baker's confessor for several years (P, p 124). When Baker was sent to England in 1638, Prichard was sent as well, so he realized that the authorities wanted to be rid of him also (P, p 145). Peter Salvin accompanied them. In England they eventually had to split up, although Prichard kept in touch with Baker. Prichard died in 1685 or 1686 (Birt (1970) p 57).

Prichard's biography of Baker is described by an early commentator as "thoroughly written" (Weldon, Vol 2, p 315). It is a long, sprawling, detailed piece of writing by someone who was a close friend and warm admirer of Baker. The tone is humble and self-effacing and does not give an impression of axe-grinding. Nevertheless, the author was sensitive to the suggestion of bias: "And lest anybody should think (as some do pretend) that it was and is my affection to Fa. Baker, which makes me doat on him and his writings and books, and not any worth or rare spirit in the said writings ..." and he goes on to say that he was greatly moved by a spiritual work before he had been told it was by Baker (P, pp 117f).

Peter Salvin, who describes himself as "a disciple and intimate friend" (S, p 1) of Baker, was born in County Durham in 1605. He visited Baker at Cambrai in 1630 and found him very helpful in discerning his vocation. He was professed at St Gregory's in 1632 and remained faithful to Baker's method of prayer. He was associated with him at Douai and returned with him to England in 1638. He died in 1675. Weldon describes Salvin's account as written "in a very particular manner and very devoutly" (Vol 2, p 315). It is not so much a systematic biography as a spiritual appreciation

of Baker, written at the request of the Cambrai community. Weldon describes Salvin as "a most wonderfull candid sincere soul and a very devout man" (Vol 2, p 438). There is a simplicity and attractiveness in his account.

Dame Clementia Cary (1615-1671), eldest daughter of the first Viscount Falkland and sister of Lucius Cary, the more famous second, was professed in the Cambrai community in 1640 (Birt, p 217). She would have had detailed information about Baker's period at Cambrai. When Prichard was urging Baker to write an autobiography the latter had said "Goe to the nuns of Cambray, and they will tell you somewhat" (P, p 124). Weldon refers to Cary's piece as "very curiously and notably" written" (Vol 2, p 315).

I have discussed Cressy, the editor of *Holy Wisdom*, in chapter 1, section 1).

Accessible modern sketches of Baker's life include James Gaffney, "Biographical Preliminaries for a Life of Dom Augustine Baker" in *American Benedictine Review*, Vol XIX:4 (Dec 1968); Anthony Low, *Augustine Baker* (New York, 1970), pp 26-52; and David Lunn, *The English Benedictines 1540-1688* (London, 1980), pp 202-217. Lunn adopts a more critical approach than the others; see also his "William Rudesind Barlow OSB - II" in *Downside Review*, No 284 (Jul 1968).

APPENDIX 2

INDEX OF PERSONS AND BOOKS

This index lists all the persons referred to in *Holy Wisdom*. Some of these are characters mentioned merely for purposes of moral edification; others are authors to whose works Baker refers. He often gives a Latin form of the names, particularly of continental authors. I have listed the names as he has them, but have in many cases added the more common vernacular form.

I have, where relevant, given the dates of the individuals and have indicated the religious orders to which they belong. In this I shall use the following (anachronistic) abbreviations:

Augustinian:	OSA
Benedictine:	OSB
Canon Regular of the Lateran:	Canon R.L.
Carmelite (discalced):	Carm. Dis.
Carthusian:	Carth.
Cistercian:	Cist.
Dominican:	OP
Franciscan:	OFM
Franciscan Capuchin:	Cap.
Jesuit:	SJ.

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Sancta Sophia &c (ed Norbert Sweeney OSB, B & O, London, 1876)

Holy Wisdom &c (ed Sweeney, B & O, London, 1911; reprint of 1876)

Holy Wisdom &c (ed Gerard Sitwell OSB, B & O, London, 1964; reissued, Anthony Clarke, Wheathampstead, 1972)

Apart from the editions of *Holy Wisdom* itself there are several paraphrases of the work, listed in Antony Low's bibliography. I have not used these and here refer only to one:

Weld-Blundell, Benedict (ed), *Contemplative Prayer* (Washbourne, London, 1907)

II PUBLISHED MATERIAL

The following titles are works by Baker. Further small sections of his writings are printed in recent articles by Hywel Wyn Owen and Luke Bell (see secondary sources, articles).

Benedictines of Stanbrook (eds)	*The Substance of the Rule of St Bennet* (Stanbrook Abbey, Worcester, 1981)
McCann, Justin (ed)	*The Confessions of Venerable Father Augustine Baker* (BO & W, London, 1922)
	"A Commentary on the Cloud by Father Augustine Baker" in *The Cloud of Unknowing and other Treatises* (BO & W, London, 1947 [1923])
McCann, J. & Connolly, H. (eds)	Rhymes, autobiography & historical account of the English Benedictine mission, in *Catholic Record Society*, Vol XXXIII (London, 1933)
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